



Russian President Vladimir Putin sacks 4 deputy defence ministers & appoints a relative, Anna Tsivileva, to fill one of the vacancies, P 13

West Bengal governor C V Ananda Bose orders Kolkata Police personnel deployed at Raj Bhavan to vacate the premises. However, the cops stay put. Bose had expressed displeasure at victims of poll violence being denied entry to Raj Bhavan despite being granted permission, P 12



Former K'taka CM B S Yediyurappa, during over 3 hours of questioning by a CID team, denies allegations that he had sexually harassed a minor girl, saying he had been 'only trying' to help her legally in an earlier sex assault case, P 9

All India Football Federation sacks senior men's team head coach Igor Stimac, terminating his contract a year before it was to expire in the wake of the side's ouster from 2nd round of FIFA WC Qualifiers, P 18



IN THE COURTS

➤ An Indian trainee pilot, 22, currently based in US, has moved Bombay HC over DGCA's refusal to allow him to fly as pilot-in-command only because of his HIV status | **P 8**

➤ Karnataka HC grants bail for 16 days to a 23-year-old man arrested under Pco Act, allowing him to marry an 18-year-old girl he has been accused of raping and with whom he fathered a child when she was a minor | **P 8**

➤ Bombay HC orders principal dist judge, Thane, to conduct a probe into functioning of juvenile court at Bhiwandi, after a clerk refused to accept a chargesheet & insisted on presence of the juvenile | **P 10**

Woman cadre among five Maoists killed

A combined team of CRPF and Jharkhand police shot dead five Maoists, including a woman cadre, and arrested two others during an anti-Naxal operation Monday in West Singhbhum district. Two other Maoists managed to escape with bullet wounds. Among the slain Maoists were Singrai, a sub-zonal committee member of the outfit, zonal committee member Kande Honhaga carrying Rs 5-lakh reward, and a squad member. **P 12**

Man electrocuted by clothesline, wife & son also die

A 45-year-old construction worker was electrocuted on Monday morning while hanging a towel on a clothesline in Dapodi village, about 85km from Pune. His 40-year-old wife and son, a Class 12 student, also suffered fatal shocks in a desperate attempt to save him. Their daughter was at a coaching class when the accident happened. **TNN**

IIT-Kgp student, 21, found dead in hostel

A 21-year-old female biotechnology student from Kerala was found dead on Monday in the hostel at IIT-Kharagpur. Many on the campus questioned the circumstances in which the student's body was found. **P 11**

AI flyer gets 'metal blade' in meal

A flyer on a Bengaluru-San Francisco AI flight on June 9 reportedly found a metal blade in his meal, which he was able to spit out before it could cause harm. AI "confirms a foreign object was found in the meal of a guest". **P 11**

Chinese link found in investment scam

While investigating an investment scam in which five people were arrested in southwest Delhi last week, police found that the gang had connections with scammers from both China and Cambodia. **P 6**

EURO 2024

Belgium vs Slovakia	0-1
Romania vs Ukraine	3-0

FULL COVERAGE **P 16**

City heat index hits 50°C, relief likely in 2 days

Delhi continued to stay in the grip of a relentless heatwave, which persisted for the ninth straight day on Monday, with the temperature at Safdarjung crossing 45 degrees C again after 17 days and the heat index, or

the 'feel-like' temperature, soaring to 50 degrees C against 46 degrees C a day earlier. The city also recorded warm night conditions for the fourth consecutive day with the minimum temperature at 33 degrees C. IMD said heatwave conditions over the region are likely to last for two more days. **P 3 & 11**

9 die as goods train rear-ends Kanchanjunga Exp in Bengal

Goods Driver & Exp's Guard Killed; 41 Injured

Roshan Gupta & Pinak Priya Bhattacharya | TNN

Siliguri/Kolkata: A goods train allegedly disregarded a signal and rear-ended the Sealdah-bound Kanchanjunga Express near north Bengal's New Jalpaiguri station at 8.55am Monday, causing four bogies and five freight containers to derail. At least nine people died and 41 were injured in the accident that was eerily similar to the three-train pile-up near Odisha's Balasore last June that killed 296.

Five of the nine who died were in a general compartment ahead of two parcel vans of the express train that seemingly absorbed most of the impact of the crash between Rangapani and Chatter Hat stations, around 11km from New Jalpaiguri. Four passenger trains had passed that stretch minutes before the accident.

Among the casualties were

'HUMAN ERROR', SIGNAL FAILURE & OTHER FACTORS



loco pilot Anil Kumar of the goods train, Kanchanjunga Express guard Ashish Dey, state excise inspector Kaleb Subba, railway employee Shankar Mohan Das, and passengers Subhajit Mali and Beauty Begum. Three of the dead hadn't been identified till late evening.

The four derailed bogies of the express and five cargo containers fell on the adjoining track, stalling rail traffic along

a stretch of the lone route that connects Guwahati and the Northeast with the rest of the country. Kavach, the railways' automatic anti-collision system, has not been installed on this busy route yet.

Railway Board chairman and CEO Jaya Varma Sinha said a "human error" by the deceased loco pilot of the goods train may have triggered the collision, while railway mi-

➤ Automatic signalling system on Rangapani stretch was down, necessitating PLCT (paper line clear ticket), which allows trains to cross signals by stopping for 1 min & moving at max speed of 15kmph
➤ Kanchanjunga Express, going to Sealdah, left Rangapani station at 8.27am. It was stopping and moving slowly as required
➤ Goods train left Rangapani at 8.42am. Rly Board says its driver disregarded PLCT, overshot signal and rear-ended Kanchanjunga Exp at 8.55am, causing its bogie to mount the goods engine (left)
➤ With goods train driver and Exp's guard dying in the accident, injured asst loco pilot alone can say what exactly happened

nister Ashwini Vaishnaw said at the accident site that a thorough inquiry by the Commission of Railway Safety would reveal the cause. "The railway accident is saddening. Condolences to those who lost their loved ones. I pray that the injured recover at the earliest. Spoke to officials and took stock of the situation," PM Modi posted on X.

► Locals 1st responders, P 10

Rahul to keep Rae Bareilly, Priyanka to make poll debut from Wayanad

Subodh.Ghildiyal @timesgroup.com

New Delhi: In what may change the complexion of both Parliament and opposition politics, Priyanka Gandhi Vadra will take the electoral plunge from Wayanad Lok Sabha constituency in Kerala, which her brother Rahul Gandhi has decided to vacate while retaining Rae Bareilly in UP.

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge made the two announcements to the media on Monday evening, after detailed discussions at his residence which involved Sonia Gandhi, the Gandhi siblings and AICC general secretary K C Venugopal — who flanked him at the press meet (barring Sonia). Lauding Priyanka for party's victories in key Lok Sabha seats, Kharge said, "jeet unke haath mein hai"



Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge made the announcements after discussions with the Gandhis and AICC general secretary K C Venugopal (she's destined to win").

Rahul won from the two constituencies in the 2024 LS polls, triggering speculation about the seat he would retain. He gave a hint of the likely decision on a thanksgiving tour to Wayanad on June 12, when he spoke about his "dilemma" over which seat to qu-

it, but added that constituents in both the places would be happy with his decision.

The announcement also kept open the possibility of Rahul agreeing to CWC's request to be the leader of the opposition in the Lok Sabha.

► 3 Gandhis in Parl? P 18

Drunk Nagpur man on joyride with pals runs over 17 on footpath, 2 dead

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Nagpur: A woman and a man from a family belonging to the Bagadiya tribe of Rajasthan were killed and 15 others were injured when a car carrying six friends, allegedly drunk after partying at a dhaba, drove onto the footpath where they were sleeping near Dighori toll plaza in Nagpur shortly before midnight Sunday.

Bhushan Lanjewar, a qualified fire engineer who was allegedly driving a Hyundai Verna under the influence, and his friends — Vansh Zade, Sanmay Patrikar, Atharva Vanayat, Atharva Mogre and Hrushikesh Choubey — were arrested. Lanjewar and his friends, all engineering students or graduates, were charged under IPC Section

TRIED TO HIT COPS

➤ Bhushan Lanjewar, who had been drinking before setting out on a joyride, allegedly drove the vehicle back and forth over the sleeping family while attempting to escape

➤ Two cops narrowly avoided being run over while trying to intercept the speeding car
➤ Car first crashed into a parked sedan, leading to a tyreburst. Lanjewar then lost control and drove onto footpath

304 (II) (culpable homicide not amounting to murder) and other sections, police said Monday. They were remanded in police custody for two days, ending June 19.

► Drove back & forth, P 18

Inebriated teen rams SUV into auto, 4 injured

Pune: Four members of an autorickshaw driver's family were injured after an 18-year-old student, who was allegedly inebriated, rammed his SUV into the three-wheeler in Pune around Sunday midnight, reports Gitesh Shelke.

The teen was produced before a court on Monday, which ordered his release on bail. He has been booked under IPC Sections 279 (rash and negligent driving), 337 and 338 (act endangering human life) and 427 (mischievous) and Sections 184 (driving dangerously) and 185 (driving by a drunken person) of the Motor Vehicles Act.

The teen was produced before a court on Monday, which ordered his release on bail. He has been booked under IPC Sections 279 (rash and negligent driving), 337 and 338 (act endangering human life) and 427 (mischievous) and Sections 184 (driving dangerously) and 185 (driving by a drunken person) of the Motor Vehicles Act.

The villagers, primarily from Yadav and Gurjar communities, were recruited as trackers and recently asked to slaughter goats and buffaloes to feed the cheetahs. They have approached CM Mohan Yadav's office, saying the duties clash with their religious beliefs. Besides exemption from slaughter duties, the trackers have also sought comprehensive insurance coverage. **P 8**



Saudagar, who still works as a tailor, bagged the 2024 Sahitya Akademi Yuva Puraskar award in Marathi for his novel, Usvan (Frayed Stitches)

2022. I took it to 10 major publishers but the novel was rejected," Saudagar, among 23 writers from across India selected for the award, told TOI.

► Had to drop out, P 18

Tailor's take on the trade bags Akademi award

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Pune: Devidas Saudagar won't ring a bell even in Marathi literary circles, but his novel Usvan (Frayed Stitches) about the trials and tribulations of the tailoring community fetched him the Sahitya Akademi Yuva Puraskar 2024 award in Marathi on Saturday.

The outpouring of a writer who dropped out of school after Std VII, took up tailoring and worked as a watchman for Rs 5,000, Saudagar's book rose from the idea of how ready-made clothes have shrunk the need for stitched ones.

"During Covid, there was no work and I started writing full-time. I did a compilation of poems in 2021 and Usvan in

Trackers refuse to slaughter for cheetah feed

Around 30 villagers hired to monitor cheetahs at Kuno national park in Madhya Pradesh's Sheopur district have gone on strike over being asked to slaughter animals to feed the big cats, reports P Naveen.

The villagers, primarily from Yadav and Gurjar communities, were recruited as trackers and recently asked to slaughter goats and buffaloes to feed the cheetahs. They have approached CM Mohan Yadav's office, saying the duties clash with their religious beliefs. Besides exemption from slaughter duties, the trackers have also sought comprehensive insurance coverage. **P 8**

China boosting nuclear arsenal, has 3x India's warheads: SIPRI

New Delhi: China is boosting its nuclear arsenal faster than any other country around the globe, and now has triple the number of warheads that India has, while it also deploys some of them on "high operational alert" on ballistic missiles, reports Rajat Pandit.

Pakistan, in turn, maintains its rough parity with India in the number of nuclear warheads, while Russia and the US are leagues ahead of others, together accounting for 90% of all nuclear weapons.

China now has 500 warheads, up from 410 in January 2023, while India has 172 (from 164 in 2023) and Pakistan 170 (unchanged from 2023), as per the latest assessment by the Stockholm International Peace Institute (SIPRI) released on Monday.

The Indian defence establishment, however, remains confident of its strategic deterrence capability, which is poised to get some additional teeth after the already-inducted over 5,000-km range Agni-5 ballistic missile was tested for the first time with multiple-warhead capability on March 11 this year.

► To plug weakest leg, P 18

Nikhil Gupta extradited to US in Pannun case, pleads not guilty

Senators To Biden Admn: Hold India Accountable

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: The arrival of US NSA Jake Sullivan in India for a review of the Initiative on Critical and Emerging Technology (iCET) coincided with an announcement by the Czech govt that Indian national Nikhil Gupta, who was indicted by American authorities for his involvement in the Gurpatwant Pannun foiled murder plot, was handed over to the US on Friday last week.

With Gupta extradited, the Biden administration came under renewed pressure to seek accountability from India on Monday. A group of Democrat Senators led by Jeff Merkley, a senior member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, wrote to secretary of state Antony Blinken calling for a strong diplomatic response, following



This photo released by US authorities allegedly shows an undercover US officer being handed \$15,000 — described by the US justice department as an advance payment — by an 'associate' of Gupta in a car in Manhattan on June 9, 2023

the "credible allegations" about the involvement of an Indian official in the plot.

Gupta, who allegedly hired a hitman to eliminate the pro-Khalistan separatist at

US, India NSAs agree to raze trade barriers

US NSA Jake Sullivan and his Indian counterpart Ajit Doval committed to "concrete action" in the coming months on long-standing barriers to strategic trade, tech and industrial cooperation, while pledging to prevent leakage of sensitive technologies to countries of concern. Sullivan also held met foreign minister S Jaishankar and called on PM Modi. **P 8**

the instance of an Indian govt official, was produced in a Manhattan federal court on Monday, where he pleaded "not guilty" to the charges. The announcement of his extradition to the US, which has a treaty with Czech Republic, was made by Czech justice minister Pavel Blazek. Czech authorities had arrested Gupta on June 30 last year.

► No one is talking, P 10

MHA to hold talks with Meiteis & Kukis to bridge ethnic divide

Bharti.Jain@timesgroup.com

New Delhi: The home ministry will hold talks "at the earliest" with Meitei and Kuki representatives from Manipur as part of a fresh bid to bridge the ethnic divide that has been causing recurrent unrest and clashes between the state's indigenous communities over the past one year.

This was stated by home minister Amit Shah at a meeting chaired by him here on Monday to review the security situation in Manipur, particularly in the wake of fresh ethnic tension triggered by the June 6 killing of a farmer in Jiribam, a town bordering Assam that until now was



HM Amit Shah chairs a meeting to review the situation in Manipur

unaffected by violence.

Sources said the talks led by MHA will be different from the off-and-on peace parleys held thus far by a central team led by senior IB officer A K Mishra, usually involving separate talks with the ethnic groups or civil society representatives. "There is a need to

bring representatives of both the communities, Kukis and Meiteis, to the table together and resolve issues causing mistrust between them... as it is done in a political-level dialogue," a senior official who did not want to be named said.

► CM absent at meet, P 10

NEET-UG row fallout: Govt mulls NTA reforms

New Delhi: Post-resolution of the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test-undergraduate (NEET-UG) controversies, significant reforms are anticipated within the National Testing Agency (NTA). According to govt sources, extensive changes in the agency's operations and exam administration are under consideration, with a high-level committee likely to be established for recommendations, reports Manash Gohain.

The NEET-UG 2024 results, announced on June 4, faced widespread criticism from students and parents.

Homeopath pays ₹16L for MBBS, gets fake degree

A homeopath from Gujarat paid Rs 16 lakh for admission to an MBBS course from a UP varsity and received his degree within a month of making full payment, without taking any exam. Realising it was a forged degree, he filed a complaint in 2019. **P 11**

Legal challenges were filed against the results, highlighting three main issues.

► After court order, P 18

Erase our names or will sue: Yogendra, Palshikar to NCERT

New Delhi: Political scientists Yogendra Yadav and Suhas Palshikar wrote to NCERT on Monday objecting to the inclusion of their names in new school textbooks after they had requested removal of their naking removal of their names as authors from the revised versions.

They warned legal action if these books were not immediately withdrawn. **TNN**

► An embarrassment, P 11

AND THEN THERE WERE 8

Group A: India, Australia, Afghanistan, Bangladesh

Group B: England, West Indies, South Africa, USA

India's Super 8 matches: June 20 vs Afghanistan. June 22 vs Bangladesh. June 24 vs Australia

INDIA (World No. 1)

Form Book: Won all three group games; match against Canada abandoned

Forté: Quality batters. In-form pacers, notably Bumrah and Arshdeep. Return of Pandya's bowling form and confidence. Axar in excellent all-round nick. Experienced, unflappable captain in Rohit Sharma

Fragility: Kohli's form (5 runs in 3 games). Lack of bite in Jadeja's bowling. Catching too must improve

Hot Star: Rishabh Pant. India's player of the group stage. Scored team's highest runs (96) with best strike rate (125). His keeping and DRS calls have been first-rate.

AFGHANISTAN (World No. 10)
Form Book: Won all three games, including upsetting formidable New Zealand. Final group game against West Indies will be over by 10am on Tuesday

Forté: In-form team



everyone should be wary of. Batting looks more solid than before.

Keeper-batter Rahmanullah Gurbaz is tournament's highest run-getter (167) so far. All-round bowling unit, especially skipper-spinner Rashid Khan and pacer Fazalhaq Farooqi

Fragility: Inexperience in winning big games. Fielding and catching can be below par

Hot Star: Fazalhaq Farooqi. The 23-year-old medium pacer, who plays for SRH in IPL, has been lethal, taking 12 wickets in 3 games. Average an astounding 3.5. Economy rate: 3.7

BANGLADESH (World No. 9)
Form Book: Won three of its four games, including a narrow two-wicket win over Sri Lanka. Lost by a mere 4 runs to S Africa

Forté: Veteran Shakib Al Hasan excels with bat and ball. Bowlers on top of their game, constantly bailing out the team

Fragility: Batting, especially captain Najmul Hossain Shanto and the classy Litton Das,

who have consistently failed

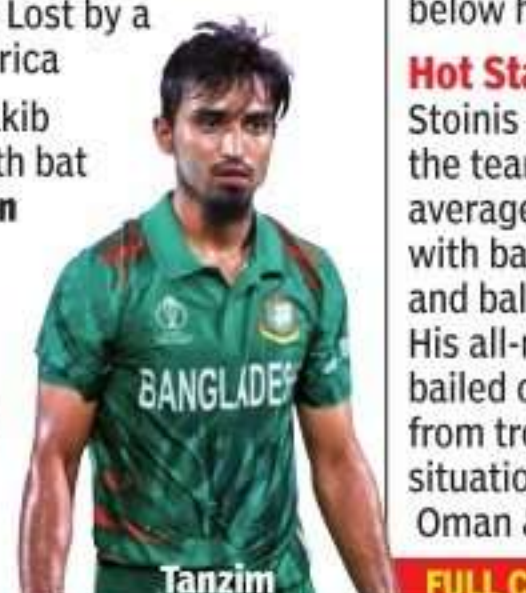
Hot Star: Tanzim Hasan Sakib. The 21-year-old from Sylhet has been penetrative and economical. His bowling figures against Nepal: 4-2-7-4 with a record 21 dot balls!

AUSTRALIA (World No. 2)
Form Book: The Aussies have a 100% record, winning all 4 group games

Forté: Warner and Head make a fearsome opening pair. Leg-spinner Adam Zampa (9 wickets at 10.4 runs apiece) is too hot to handle. World-class fielding and catching gives them an edge over rivals. **Temperamentally strong,** the team has found a match-winner whenever in crisis

Fragility: Strike bowler Mitchell Starc has been below his best

Hot Star: Marcus Stoinis heads the team's average with bat and ball. His all-round show bailed out the Aussies from troubled situations against Oman & Scotland



FULL COVERAGE | P 17

India is set to surpass Japan & Germany
to become the world's third largest economy
by 2027 - Morgan Stanley

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Heat Stroke Alert: Five In Hospitals, Three Critical

90-Year-Old Among Those Admitted, 3 Patients On Ventilator

Anuja.Jaiswal@timesgroup.com

New Delhi: As the city continues to reel under extreme heat, five people were admitted to Ram Manohar Lohia, Safdarjung and Lok Nayak hospitals because of heat stroke in the past two days.

Two of the three patients admitted to RML are in critical condition and on ventilator support with comorbid conditions.

An 80-year-old man was admitted to RML in a critical condition, according to a doctor who provided comprehensive details about the case.

The patient was unconscious upon arrival and had a dangerously high rectal temperature of 107.5 degrees Fahrenheit, indicating hyperthermia, a condition characterised by an abnormally elevated body temperature. Due to the patient's low blood pressure of 60 (systolic) and respiratory distress, immediate medical intervention was necessary. The medical team intubated the patient and placed him on a ventilator to support his breathing. Immersion cooling techniques were employed, successfully reducing his temperature to 98.4 degrees Fahrenheit within an hour.

Although the patient exhibited symptoms suggestive of a heart attack, the medical team is awaiting the results of a CT scan and cardiac reference for a definitive diagnosis. In the meantime, the patient is receiving treatment for heat-related illness and is being administered cardiac medication. Despite the



DESPERATE FOR RELIEF

prompt medical attention, the doctor emphasised that the patient's condition remained critical.

Another patient, currently on ventilator support, is a 31-year-old woman who was transferred from a private hospital. The patient's medical records indicated that she had been travelling within the past 24 hours and experienced multiple episodes of vomiting. Upon arrival at the hospital, her temperature

was recorded to be 105 degrees Fahrenheit, and her blood pressure was significantly elevated, with a systolic reading of 240. The patient was diagnosed with a heat-related illness in conjunction with a hypertensive emergency. Despite the stabilisation of her blood pressure and pulse, her condition remained critical. The medical team is closely monitoring her progress and providing the necessary care to support her recovery while she remains on ventilator support.

A 60-year-old man, the third patient, was admitted to the hospital after fainting while working in extremely hot weather. Neighbours brought him in. His body temperature was 105 degrees Fahrenheit. The medical team immediately initiated immersion cooling therapy, successfully reducing his temperature to 97.5 degrees Fahrenheit. Despite the patient's drowsy state, no signs of brain damage were detected during the examination. The patient's overall condition has shown improvement since admission.

At Safdarjung Hospital, a 90-year-old woman, who was unconscious at the time of admission, was intubated as her condition was very critical. She is a chronic smoker. Her temperature was 105 degrees F.

A 40-year-old man was brought to Lok Nayak Hospital with a high-grade fever accompanied by altered mental status, doctors at the hospital said.

Fire at south Delhi hospital, pandal in east, nobody hurt

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Panic erupted at a hospital in south Delhi's Kotla Mubarakpur on Monday after a fire broke out. No injuries or casualties were reported in the incident.

Fire department officials said they received a call around 12.35 pm. Eight fire tenders with 40 firefighters were sent to the spot. "The fire was in the meter boxes. No casualties or injuries were reported," the official said.

A senior police officer said smoke in the meter room caused panic. "There were about 15-20 patients inside. They were evacuated on stretchers. Ambulances were called to transport them," the officer said. The fire was doused quickly, he added.

Atul Garg, director, Delhi Fire Service (DFS), said the hospital had a fire NOC (No Objection Certificate), but the fire suppression system was not functioning.

There were 30 fire incidents in hospitals in 2022, and 36 last year. There have been 11 fire incidents in hospitals as of May 26 this year.

Earlier this month, a fire broke out at a children's eye hospital in Lajpat Nagar. Nearly 60 people, including staff and nearby residents, had a narrow escape. In May, a massive fire broke out at a hospital in Vivek Vihar, in which seven children were killed.

Meanwhile, a marquee being erected for a marriage function in east Delhi's Shastri Park was gutted in a fire on Monday, officials said.

The incident was reported at around 2.51 pm, and no one was injured in the incident, DFS officials said.

At least eight fire tenders were pressed into service, and the fire was under control within an hour, a DFS officer said, adding that wooden structures and the marquee were gutted.

An investigation has been initiated to ascertain the cause of the fire, police said.

"According to weather conditions, fire calls go up or down. During extreme heat conditions, we usually receive 200 calls, of which 60% are related to fire and 40% related to rescuing animals and birds," Garg added.

FESTIVE FERVOUR

Tarun Rawat



EID MUBARAK: Children have fun after the namaz on Eid al-Adha at Jama Masjid

Report over 2022 fire in Old Delhi in, but no action taken

Vibha.Sharma@timesgroup.com

New Delhi: Shop owners in old Delhi have repeatedly raised concerns about the dangerous power lines hanging overhead in the markets, but their pleas have gone unheard. They say that these precariously hanging wires have caused numerous fires every summer, resulting in extensive property damage and losses amounting to crores of rupees.

A joint committee comprising members of different official agencies submitted an inquiry report on the Bhagirath Palace fire of November 2022 to the lieutenant governor in February 2023. The report recommended that a comprehensive redevelopment plan should be implemented, including pushing cables and wires underground.

While no response on this was available from MCD and Delhi govt, area MP, Praveen Khandelwal, who was part of the 2022 joint committee, said, "To the best of my knowledge, no action has been taken on the 2022 report. I shall take up the recommendations of the committee with the LG and Delhi Govt and, if required, with the central govt."

Sanjay Bhargava, a representative of Chandni Chowk

Vyapar Mandal, said, "Over 200 shops were gutted in that fire caused allegedly by a short circuit. It took firefighters five days to bring the blaze under control. After an inspection on November 26, 2022, LG VK Saxena directed the stakeholders to address the issue of hanging wires and overloaded circuits in Chandni Chowk, Sadar Bazar and Paharganj. But no action has been taken on this so far."

Bhargava also pointed out that buildings that collapse or suffer damages in infernos in old Delhi cannot be reconstructed unless MCD presents a comprehensive redevelopment plan in accordance with the Master Plan of Delhi 2021.

"So many inspections have

ve taken place, but there's no action," said Ashish Grover, general secretary, Delhi Drug Traders Association. "Fed up, we decided to at least get the electricity meters installed ourselves. But even that couldn't go beyond one building due to lack of support from the official agencies."

Grover revealed that after the recent fire at Nai Sadak, the issue of dangling wires was again broached with Khandelwal, who has called a meeting on Wednesday. "We have invited the former executive director of Power Grid Corporation and his team to the meeting. We will prepare a project report based on Wednesday's discussions," said Khandelwal.

File photo



The panel suggests putting utilities like wires and cables underground

Water crisis may hit Lutyens' Delhi too

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) has urged residents to use water sparingly due to a significant reduction in the supply of potable water at two underground reservoirs in Lutyens' Delhi. Officials of NDMC, which issued a public notice on Monday, have claimed that Delhi Jal Board (DJB) has informed the council that the water supply at these reservoirs will be reduced by 60%.

An NDMC official said, "We have been informed by DJB officials that Tilak Marg and Bengali Market underground reservoirs will receive only 40% water supply for now. Since we are not aware till when this crisis will continue, it is imperative that people use water judiciously and for essential purposes only."

The official further added, "DJB officials said that the production of potable water from the Wazirabad plant was not running at full capacity due to non-avail-

ability of raw water; hence the water supply in command area of the two reservoirs would be made available once in a day and preferably in morning".

The crisis will affect several major areas, including Bengali Market, Ashoka Road, Harish Chander Mathur Lane, Copernicus Marg, Purana Quila Road, Babar Road, Barakhamba, KG Marg, Windsor Place, Firoz Shah Marg and Canning Lane.

NDMC has 27 reservoirs in total. The remaining 25 reservoirs are also experiencing a 25-30% reduction in supply, the NDMC official claimed.

TOI did not get any response from DJB over the alleged water crisis threat in Lutyens' Delhi.

The council has set up a control room to provide water tankers to consumers in the affected areas, if required. The helpline numbers for the control room are 011-2336 0683 and 011-2374 3642. It has

also requested the public to take measures to avoid water wastage, such as fixing leakages, refraining from using drinking water for car washing, re-charging groundwater, adopting micro-irrigation techniques for gardening or plantation, recycling drinkable water for other uses, and not polluting water sources under any circumstances.

NDMC receives a daily water supply of 125 million litres with DJB contributing 120 million litres per day. To ensure efficient water distribution, a network of pipelines spanning 450 kilometres has been installed throughout the NDMC jurisdiction.

In order to address any shortfalls in the water supply, NDMC has deployed a fleet of 20 water tankers and 25 water trolleys. These vehicles are strategically positioned to provide supplementary water to areas experiencing temporary deficiencies.

27
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IN NDMC
AREAS, 2 TO
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Investment scam: Probe finds links to Chinese scammers

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: While investigating an investment scam in which five people, including an MBBS student, were arrested in southwest Delhi last week, police discovered that the gang had connections with scammers from both China and Cambodia.

A police source said the Cambodian fraudsters orchestrated a bogus investment WhatsApp group to entice unsuspecting people into investing their money.

While analysing the WhatsApp group, police found that a majority of the people added were scammers posing as group members from Cambodia.

“One of them posed as a financial advisor who used to give fake advice to the group members on how to earn more money, and some tasks were given to them where they used to earn some money to win their trust. The whole thing was to create an ecosystem where the target believed that the other people were also members like him and they were investing,” the source said.

The source added that the money duped from the victims was then transferred into cryptocurrency and moved to accounts in China.

In April, while investiga-

ting the case of a doctor from a prominent hospital who was duped of Rs 29 lakh on the promise of high returns, the Southwest district’s cyber cell arrested Rohit (38), Varun (23), Manish Mann (29) and Uday Mittal (37).

Their interrogation led to the arrest of Aizaz Ahmad, a resident of Patna. He was apprehended at IGI Airport after a lookout circular was issued against him. Ahmad was studying MBBS in Kazakhstan and was overseeing illegal operations in India along with his associates for foreign scammers. He met his aides through an application.

“While studying MBBS in Kazakhstan, the 24-year-old student came in touch with scammers who linked him with Chinese nationals involved in investment fraud,” the source said.

“He started a WhatsApp group three to four months ago and cheated people of nearly Rs 5 crore, which he transferred to his associates’ accounts after converting it into cryptocurrency,” the source added. Cops have written to the crypto wallet and sought details of the account holders.

The gang was found to be involved in 22 complaints on the National Cybercrime Reporting Portal.

For ‘Honour’, Man Slits Daughter’s Neck With Cutter, Watches Her Die

Strongly Against Alliance With Man From Another Caste, Held 12 Hrs Later

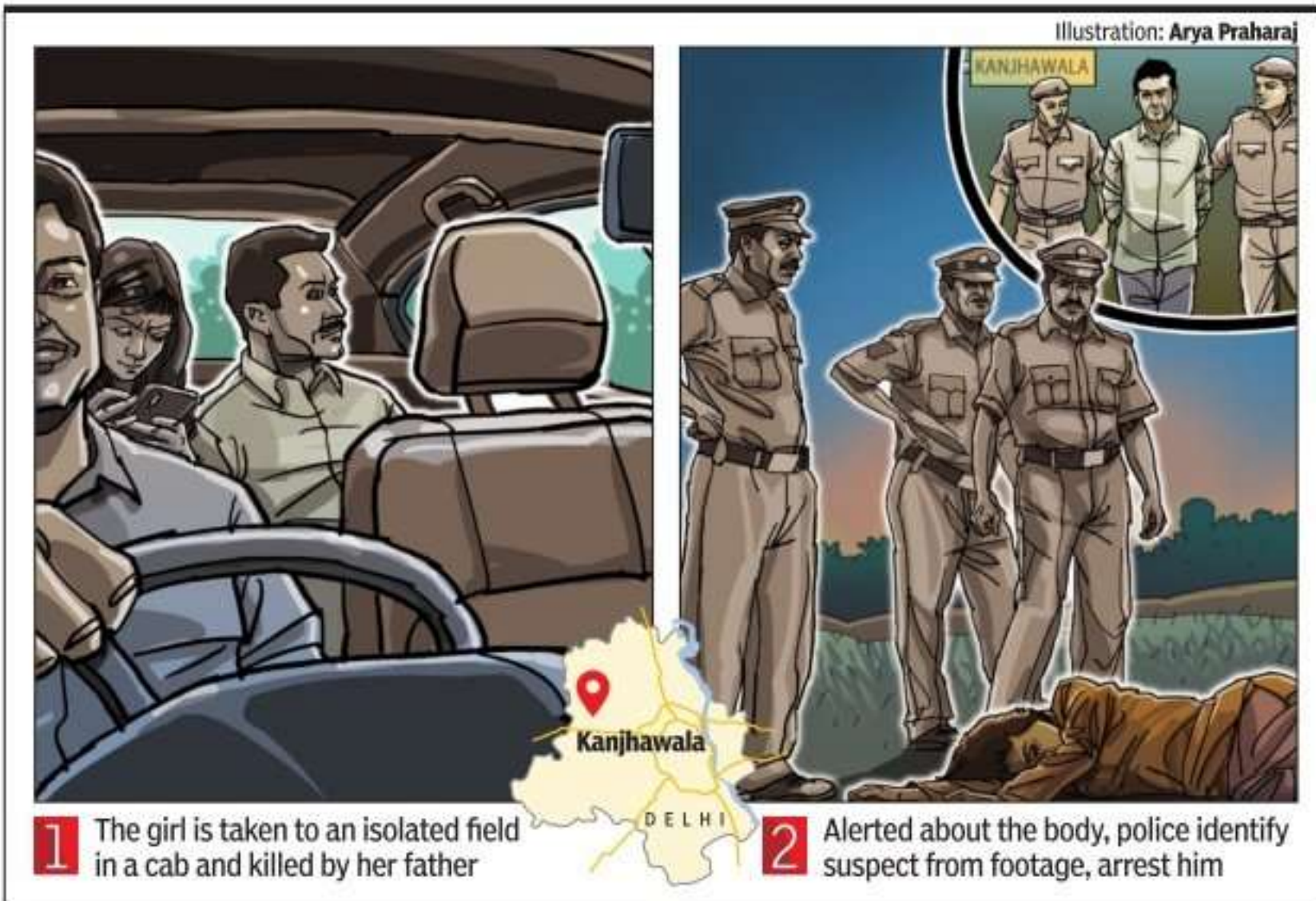
Rajshekhhar Jha
@timesgroup.com

New Delhi: It was love at first sight for Amrita and Shubham (names have been changed to protect identities). They were of the same age and lived in the same neighbourhood in Bihar’s Muzaffarpur. Amrita, a Class XII student, met Shubham on the way to school and after classes too. However, their friendship was not acceptable to their families because they were from different castes.

Amrita’s family belonged to the Nai caste while the boy was from the Mallah community. In spite of the opposition, Amrita and Shubham’s love only grew deeper. Rattled by this, the girl’s family sent her to Delhi so that she would be far from the boy and not “ruin the family’s prestige in society”. Amrita’s father also had a glass business in Delhi and thought she would be “in check” there.

However, the two proved inseparable. Amrita, aged around 20, began to live in Prem Nagar in northwest Delhi with her brother, but kept in touch with Shubham over the phone. The brother apparently kept updating the family about how Amrita was “not ready to give up” on the boy.

Amrita tried convincing



her parents and her brother to let her go back to Shubham, but the father was strongly opposed to the alliance. The continued phone calls and the audio and video messages left him furious. A few days ago, Amrita’s father suspected that she was about to elope with the boy and get married against the wishes of the family and confronted her. The argument turned nasty and the father decided to kill his daughter.

He scouted for an isolated place in Kanjhawala in northwest Delhi. On Sunday evening, he asked her to accompany him for a “final discussion” on the issue and took her to a field in Kanjhawala. Once there, he asked her if she would change her mind. The moment she said no, the father whipped out a paper cutter and slit her throat. As she gasped for breath, he made further incisions in her belly. He then sat there and watched her die. When she stopped responding and had

rough came from the analysis of the CCTV footage which showed a cab in the area. The footage also showed two passengers in the cab.”

Local informers were roped in and technical surveillance was mounted. The investigators managed to trace the cab driver through the vehicle’s registration number. The driver said he had dropped a woman and a man at the place of incident. The details given by the driver, including the number used to book the cab, helped the cops identify the girl and the family. The girl’s father was found missing and became a suspect. He had, in any case, been spotted around the scene of crime, the cops said.

The accused, aged 46, was eventually tracked through technical surveillance and human intelligence. “The suspect was planning to flee Delhi and go to Bihar. However, he was nabbed within 12 hours of the murder being reported,” said a senior officer.

Ravindra Yadav, special commissioner (law and order), appreciated the efforts made by the investigative team in the quick disposal of the case. A chargesheet will be filed at the earliest, he said. Police have recovered the weapon of offence, the paper cutter.

Bank told to pay man ₹46k lost in unauthorised debits from a/c

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: A city consumer forum has held Allahabad Bank liable for deficiency in services after it failed to inform and later investigate 10 unauthorised debits from the customer’s account that totalled Rs 46,000.

The forum has directed the bank to refund Rs 46,000 along with interest and compensate the complainant for mental anguish and litigation costs.

The complainant had a savings account with Allahabad Bank. He claimed that despite multiple withdrawals, totalling Rs 46,000, from his account, he did not receive a single SMS notification regarding these transactions. When he visited the branch, the consumer found out about the unauthorised transactions after updating his passbook. The withdrawals were done from various locations.

The district consumer dispute redressal commission-V, North-West Delhi bench — comprising Sanjay Kumar (president), Nipur Chandna (member) and Rajesh (member) — noted that the bank acknowledged that the consumer had lodged a complaint regarding 10 unauthorised withdrawals from his account. In its letter, the bank said it had escalated the matter with the ATM back office in Mumbai and contacted other banks regarding the fraudulent transactions.

However, despite the effort, the other banks, through which the debits were made, only provided SMS details of the transactions and failed to furnish CCTV footage or initiate chargebacks for refunding the money.

Consequently, the bank withheld the credited shadow balance of Rs 46,000 pending the outcome of its investigation. Additionally, the RBI ombudsman closed the complainant’s case without issuing any decision, the commission said.

The commission noted that the complainant diligently followed RBI guidelines by approaching the bank, law enforcement and the banking ombudsman, while the bank initially credited the disputed amount following RBI guidelines, then later withheld it without conducting a thorough investigation.

Concluding the matter, the commission held that the bank was liable for deficiency in service and directed it to refund Rs 46,000 to the consumer, along with 6% interest per annum. The commission also directed the bank to pay Rs 15,000 to him as compensation for the pain, mental agony and litigation costs.

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Dr. Usha Sukul

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Shri Harpal Singh Bedi
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Bhog & Antim
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Pallavi Bedi (Daughter)
(9910061919) Avinash Menon (Son-in-Law)
(9873169599)
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With profound grief and sorrow, we regret to inform you about the passing away of our loved & respected mother.

Mrs. BRINDA SHANKAR
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Beloved wife of (Late) Mr. Vijay N. Shankar, she will forever be cherished and remembered fondly by the many whose hearts & lives she touched.
In Grief
Tanya & Govinda Berry
Lara & Manu Chandra
Arjun, Karan, Sahil, Rishabh
Sivappa, Shankar, Savana & Bahadur Families

Four policemen suspended for ₹24L ‘extortion’

New Delhi: Four policemen from Laxmi Nagar police station have been suspended for allegedly extorting Rs 24 lakh from a Panipat resident by threatening him with fabricated hawala money laundering charges, sources said.

On May 29, a man from Panipat, who sought to send his son abroad for studies, contacted an agent who promised to arrange a visa. He was instructed to stay at a hotel in Laxmi Nagar. However, he ended up staying at a hotel in Shakarpur.

“Someone claiming to be an associate of the agent visited me. He filmed the money and left,” the complainant said.

The associate returned with four policemen. They took the man to the police station and threatened to slap false hawala charges on him. Fearing the implications, he was forced to surrender Rs 24 lakh. TNN

When there is predator in family, who shall protect children: Court

Vineet Upadhyay
@timesgroup.com

New Delhi: A Delhi court has sentenced a man to 12 years rigorous imprisonment for kidnapping and repeatedly raping his minor niece in Jan 2017. It also directed him to provide Rs 10.5 lakh compensation to the survivor, who is now 24 years old and married.

When there is a predator within the family, who shall protect the children, it wondered.

The court of additional sessions judge Susheel Bala Dagar, in an order dated June 5, stated, “Home is known as the safest place in the world for children. The persons in a shared household are regarded as the most trusted persons. But with the increase in the crimes against women, the crime

against children in the form of incest rape has come to light. Children are falling victim to sexual offences done by their family member, relative, teacher, acquaintance, etc. Being innocent of their age; both boys and girls are abused.”

The court also sentenced him to 10 years rigorous imprisonment each for the offences under sections 366 and 363 of the Indian Penal Code. The sentences will run concurrently, it stated.

The court was hearing a case against the man who was convicted under the penal provisions for rape, kidnapping and Section 6 (aggravated penetrative sexual assault) of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act. It noted that the man had committed aggravated

penetrative sexual assault upon the minor after kidnapping and seducing her for illicit intercourse despite knowing fully well that he had a wife and could not marry the girl, who was about 17 years of age in 2017.

“The children of the present day are the future of society. The interest of the vulnerable child needs to be protected for a healthy, developed and vibrant society. The psychological scars of the sexual abuses during childhood are indelible and they keep haunting the individual forever thereby hindering their proper physical and psychological development,” the court stated further.

“In a patriarchal society as in our country, everyone is quick to blame the victim child

involved in any such incident of penetrative sexual assault and seduction by the culprit for illicit intercourse. Rather it is the convict, who is a family member responsible for the heinous crime with the victim child, on whom the full blame ought to lie,” it added.

Remarking that the proposition that children are the safest with family and known persons has turned out to be a myth due to persons like the convict, the court stated that “it is the responsibility of society as a whole to take care of its children and to protect them from their physiological and psychological exploitation at the hands of the sexual abusers”.

Additional public prosecutor Yogita Kaushik Dahiya appeared for the prosecution.

Man arrested for shooting mother-in-law

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: A 26-year-old man allegedly shot dead his mother-in-law at her home in northwest Delhi’s Shalimar Bagh following a dispute over money and marital discord with his wife. The accused, Sumit, a cook, was arrested on Monday.

Police said they received a PCR call around 12.30 pm on Sunday, reporting that a woman had been shot at her home in the Haiderpur area. Upon arriving at the scene, they found blood on the floor and an empty bullet cartridge, which was seized.

The family told police that Neetu was shot by her son-in-law, Sumit. She was admitted to a hospital but succumbed to her injuries. A case was registered, and multiple teams were formed to apprehend the accused.

“Raids were conducted, and the suspect was finally nabbed. He confessed to the crime,” an officer said.

Sumit is a resident of Meerut and worked as a cook in a restaurant in the Dakhimpuri area. He married Neetu’s daughter six years ago, and they have a six-month-old son. Sumit frequently had disputes with his wife, police found.

Sumit allegedly lent money to Neetu on interest. “She returned some money to him. He told us that Neetu often intervened in Sumit’s disputes with his wife and fought with him over money. This often led to quarrels between Sumit and Neetu at home and over the phone. There was a dispute about this issue on the day of the incident as well. He came to his in-laws’ home and shot Neetu in the chest amid the fight,” the officer said.

Before anyone could apprehend him, Sumit fled the spot.

₹40cr cheating: No bail

New Delhi: A Delhi court recently denied bail to a man accused in a case of cheating worth Rs 40 crore with Custom department since year 2018.

The court of Additional Sessions Judge Devender Kumar Jangala dismissed the bail plea of Amit Agarwal considering the allegations against him and his conduct.

Delhi police’s EOW is probing the case. It is alleged that Rs. 20.9 crores were transferred in the bank account of accused. TNN

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Rahul Gupta, Vikas Dhalla & Mohit Sethi (Grand Sons-in-Law)
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Patient in Rohini OT, surgeon operates from Gurgaon

Anuja.Jaiswal@timesgroup.com

New Delhi: A team of doctors from Rajiv Gandhi Cancer Institute and Research Centre (RGCIRC) in Rohini has successfully performed the first-ever telesurgery using the first indigenous surgical robot, Mantra. In employing this system, the fibre-optic cable played a crucial role because a reliable connection was necessary between the doctor and the robot, located 40km away from each other.

The surgical procedure, lasting one hour and 45 minutes, was carried out remotely from Gurgaon, with the surgeon controlling the robotic instruments through a console.

Meanwhile, the patient remained at RGCIRC, receiving care from the local medical staff present at the hospital throughout the entire operation. Doctors claimed that this complex surgery was performed in India for the first time.

The 52-year-old patient from Delhi was suffering from urinary bladder cancer and was operated upon by surgeon Dr SK Rawal, who is also the medical director of the cancer institute. The patient is doing well, revealed Rawal.

Rawal said made-in-India surgical robots had the potential to revolutionise healthcare access in smaller cities and remote locations.

Surgical robots manufactured by international companies are prohibitively expensive, making it unfeasible to deploy them in smaller Indian cities or towns. However, the development of indigenous surgical robots by cardiac surgeon Dr Sudhir Srivastava offers a cost-effective way to bridge this gap

With these robots, skilled surgeons can operate from distant locations and successfully provide high-quality care to patients in "C class cities, war or space". This technology eliminates the need for the physical presence of experts.

Surgical robots manufactured by international companies are prohibitively expensive, making it unfeasible to deploy them in smaller Indian cities or towns. However, the development of indigenous surgical robots by cardiac surgeon Dr Sudhir Srivastava offers a cost-effective way to bridge this gap.

By placing these robots in previously underserved areas, expert surgeons can extend their reach and offer advanced surgical procedures to a wider population. In the current case, the surgeon, with precision and expertise, guided the robotic arms to remove the urinary bladder along with the lymph nodes on the sides of the bladder. The advanced technology allowed the doctor to control the robot's movements with incredible accuracy. The patient also required only a very small incision of 4-5cm when in open surgery, the incision length would be 15-20cm long.

Rawal said that this innovative approach to surgery showcased the potential for telemedicine to revolutionise healthcare delivery. It enabled expert medical professionals to provide critical care to patients regardless of geographic distance.

Summer Show: Green Rejig Planned For 7 City Forests

Cycle Tracks, Bird Watching Decks, Canopy Walks On Table

Priyangi.Agarwal@timesgroup.com

New Delhi: Seven city forests will be upgraded with eco-friendly features such as trails, cycling tracks, bird watching decks and sitting areas.

The redevelopment of the city forests is part of the summer action plan, which was released on Thursday, to deal with air pollution.

Delhi has 20 city forests, spread over 549.64 hectares. Of these, seven will be redeveloped. These are Alipur, Mukhmelpur, Qutubgarh and Mamurpur city forests in the north forest division; Hauzrani in the south forest division; Mitraon city forest in the west forest division; and Shastri Park metro station in the central forest division.

"As part of the redevelopment, eco-friendly trails, cycle tracks, bird watching decks, canopy walks, sitting areas and open interpretation signage will be created," a senior official said. Last year, the forest department identified 16 parameters to upgrade all existing and upcoming city forests in an environment-friendly manner.

The official added: "Forests play an important role in a city like Delhi. They not only trap pollutants but also control heat emissions. City forests are also home to birds and butterflies."

The setting up of three additional city forests — Garhi Mandu in the central division, Lal Kuan in the south, and Ujwa in the west division — has been proposed.

Delhi environment minister Gopal Rai, who released the summer action plan on Thursday, said: "Seven city forests will be improved with eco-friendly features, and three new city forests are proposed to be created."

According to Delhi Forest and Wildlife Department's

PART OF CITY'S SUMMER ACTION PLAN

Seven city forests will be redeveloped, eco-friendly features will be added

The redevelopment of these city forests is part of the summer action plan,

introduced to tackle pollution

Creation of three new city forests has been proposed

Delhi currently has 20 city forests spread over 549.6 hectares

CITY FORESTS BEING DEVELOPED CURRENTLY

- Alipur (North forest division)
- Mukhmelpur (North)
- Mamurpur (North)
- Hauzrani (South forest division)
- Qutubgarh (North)
- Mitraon City Forest (West forest division)
- Shastri Park metro station (Central Forest Division)

THREE NEW CITY FORESTS PROPOSED

- Garhi Mandu (Central forest division)
- Lal Kuan (South forest division)
- Ujwa (West forest division)



FEATURES



SENIOR OFFICIAL SAYS

Forests play an important role in a city like Delhi. They not only trap pollutants but also control heat emissions. Forests are also home to birds and butterflies

website, the aim behind developing city forests is to sequester carbon and harvest rain-

water intensively in the forests, facilitate nature-based education and outreach activities and develop ecotourism on sustainability principles defined by United Nations Environment Programme.

The forest department said the provisions of the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980, the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, the Delhi Preservation of Trees Act, 1994, and the Indian Forest Act, 1927, are applicable to city forests.

"Certain activities are regulated in city forests. These are to be declared 'no plastic zones'. Solid waste management has to be done here, and no discharge of effluents or pollutants within the city forest premises is allowed. Felling, pruning or any kind of damage to trees is prohibited. Feeding of wild animals is to be strictly prohibited, and only pedestrians will be allowed to enter the city parks," an official said.

On high court order, MCD checks dairies, 10 facilities already sealed

Vibha.Sharma@timesgroup.com

New Delhi: The Municipal Corporation of Delhi and other government agencies are undertaking a survey of authorised dairy areas in the city, following the directives of Delhi High Court. The aim of the survey is to identify violations, such as the misuse of allocated plots for non-dairy purposes, unauthorised construction, lack of proper licensing, unhygienic conditions and inadequate space for livestock.

The agencies are required to submit the survey report by July 12. According to sources, 10 dairies have been sealed for violations identified during the survey and some others have been issued notices. The survey encompasses the 11 dairy colonies of Ghogha, Goyla, Nagli Sakrawati, Kakrola, Shahbad, Madanpur Khadar, Jharoda, Bhalswa, Masoodpur, Gharoli and Masoodpur. Nine of these localities have already been surveyed, according to officials.

During the inspection, it was noted that many plots in these areas were unoccupied or were being misused for purposes other than dairying, prompting MCD to seal them. At Ghogha, of the 2,080 plots designated for dairy farming, only 228 were found physically occupied thus far and of them only 139 were being utilised for running dairies. Remarkably, not a single application for the issue or renewal of a dairying licence had been approved by MCD in this area, according to a report.

In May, the high court had directed MCD to remove all encroachments and commercial establishments from

PLOTS UNOCCUPIED, BEING MISUSED

Following HC order, MCD, along with other agencies, is surveying 11 dairies to check violations

Nine places covered so far | Ghogha, Goyla, Nagli Sakrawati, Kakrola, Shahbad, Madanpur Khadar, Jharoda, Bhalswa, Masoodpur

FINDINGS SO FAR	Plots allotted	Running	Physical possession given for	No licence issued
1. Ghogha	2,080	139	139	16 licences issued
2. Bhalswa	1,328	188	188	16 licences issued
3. Shahbad	958	18	18	No licence issued
4. Masoodpur	228	50	50	No licence issued

BETTER PERFORMERS	Plots allotted	All have licences	1,246 have licences
5. Goyla	1,912	1,354	1,246 have licences
6. Nangli Sakrawati	1,372	1,894	1,246 have licences
7. Madanpur Khadar	212	152	10 have licences

Ghogha. An official said, "We found violations such as dairy plots being resold and used for industrial purposes. In some places, there were unauthorised constructions too. These issues have been intimated to the court. We accordingly sealed the premises or issue notices of the violations to the owners."

MCD is also verifying that these dairies are not over-crowded and that each animal is provided with an average area of 10.5 sq metres as per norms. "During the survey, all deficiencies highlighted by the court commissioner are being verified," said the official.

At Masoodpur, of the 220

During the inspection, it was noted that many plots in these areas were unoccupied or were being misused for purposes other than dairying, prompting MCD to seal them

daily plots, only 50 were being used for dairy farming, and no licences had been issued. "So far, we haven't received any application for running these dairies," said an MCD official. "To motivate people to apply for licences, MCD is adopting measures such as organising camps in the are-

as concerned, teaching people to keep their surroundings neat and clean and disposing of cow dung properly."

The survey conducted by the civic body reveals a significant disparity in the number of licensed dairy plots across various dairy localities in the city. At Bhalswa, only 16 people among 1,328 plot owners had acquired licences. There were 188 dairies operating.

Kakrola contrasted with a high compliance rate, with all 405 occupants of the 516 plots having obtained licences. Jharoda fell in between, with 409 out of 485 plots occupied for dairy farming, but only 100 occupants being licensed. The survey is midway through in Ghazipur and Gharoli.

Officials have noted that during the allotment process, many people failed to take possession of their plots or only submitted one or two instalments of payments. Sources suggested that the applicants had reservations about the allocation policy, which limited the space to just 5-8 animals per dairy and prohibited the amalgamation of plots that were allotted through a draw of lots.

In its upcoming court submission, MCD plans to provide updates on the facilities being developed or already in progress for the proper disposal of cow dung. While a bio-methanation plant with a capacity of 200 tonnes per day is undergoing a trial run at Nangli and Kakrola, one of 200 TPD is under construction at Ghogha. MCD is in the process of developing a third plant of 200 TPD at Goyla. In Ghazipur, the civic body has requested DDA for space for a plant.

Safdarjung hosp to staff: No work-linked post on social media

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: The Safdarjung Hospital administration in a circular has directed its staff not to post any unofficial content related to their assigned work and /job responsibilities on social media or instant messaging platforms such as WhatsApp, Facebook and Instagram, including status updates, which could harm the reputation of the hospital.

Employees who violate the directive could face disciplinary action, including suspension. The circular stated that employees should ensure that their social media activities do not reflect negatively about the hospital or its employees. "It has been observed that some staff members have been posting such content," the circular said.

The circular, by deputy director (admin) Ashok Kumar Pal, said that this should serve as a strict reminder that any such action is strictly prohibited.

It will be effective immediately and all personnel must comply with the laid-down guidelines. This includes refraining from posting any content that may tarnish the hospital's reputation, unfairly criticising tasks assigned by supervisors, or employing unofficial or inappropriate language as outlined in the prohibited content section.

The circular emphasised that the directive encompasses various digital communication channels, including WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram and a wide array of other sites. While some of the most widely used services were explicitly mentioned, the circular made it clear that the list was not exhaustive and that the rules would apply to any digital space where users can interact and share information.

Employees who violate the directive could face disciplinary action, including suspension

Central Civil Services (Conduct) Rules, 1964. The management may impose penalties such as suspension, termination or other disciplinary measures as they see fit, based on the severity of the violation. The decision regarding the appropriate disciplinary action will be at the discretion of the management.

Staff members are required to uphold the utmost professional standards in all their interactions, whether in person or on digital platforms. If any issue or complaint arises, they should be communicated via the appropriate official processes within the organisation, not aired publicly on social networking sites, it said.

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Panel seeks rain harvest plan for court complex

New Delhi: The Delhi State-level Expert Appraisal Committee (SEAC) has asked the Public Works Department, which sought environmental clearance for the construction of a district court at Rohini, to prepare a management strategy for rainwater harvesting, taking into account recent flash rain data and the actual percolation rate of the soil at the site.

"Calculate runoff from rooftop, other paved areas, and green areas separately. Review the peak rainfall runoff threshold used in the calculation, given the experience of the last five years with extreme rainfall events and the likely increase in frequency with climate change in the next 50 years, and create an adaptive strategy accordingly," said SEAC, according to the minutes of the meeting held on June 10.

The project proponent informed SEAC in its proposal that there were no trees inside the plot boundary, but bushes, namely Kikar, were present. However, SEAC directed it to submit a tree site report, including a physical tree count of all trees, along with tree girths, and the local and scientific names of the trees.

The total plot area of the project is 17.415 sqm, and the total population expected is 11,225 persons, including the floating population. The height of the building would be 59.7 metres.

Environmental clearance is given to ensure that the area remains unaffected across several parameters. These include plans to control dust and air pollution at the site, usage of treated water during construction and water requirement post-construction, provision of rainwater harvesting, solid waste management plans, parking infrastructure, eco-sensitive areas in the neighborhood, and the number of trees required to be felled or transplanted. TNN

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3 INDEPENDENTS LEND 'UNCONDITIONAL' SUPPORT TO PEMA KHANDI-LED BJP GOVT IN ARUNACHAL

BJD CHIEF PATNAIK LIKELY TO BECOME LOP IN ODISHA, FIRST TIME IN HIS POLITICAL CAREER

Sullivan meets Doval, both sides agree to dismantle barriers to strategic trade

India Committed To Strengthening Partnership With US For Global Good: Modi

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New Delhi: US NSA Jake Sullivan and his Indian counterpart Ajit Doval committed "concrete action" in the coming months against long-standing barriers to strategic trade, technology and industrial cooperation, while pledging to prevent leakage of sensitive technologies to countries of concern, in what was the first high-level engagement between the two countries since the return of NDA govt this month.

Sullivan arrived in India Monday to undertake along with Doval a comprehensive review of cooperation under the Initiative on Critical and Emerging Technology (iCET). The initiative is expected to propel the relationship to the next level by removing regulatory barriers and developing a new defence industrial road-map for joint development and production.

Sullivan also held talks with foreign minister S Jaishankar and called on PM Modi who on X said that India remains committed to strengthening the In-

iCET THE NEXT BIG THING

The talks on Monday also focused on

- Securing semiconductor supply chains
- Bridging innovation ecosystems by unlocking a combined \$90 million funding for cooperation between institutions
- Civilian and space defence technology cooperation
- Pursuing advanced telecom

opportunities like forging partnerships to deploy high-quality, cost-effective Open RAN technology

➤ Pursuing quantum, AI, and high-performance computing collaboration

➤ Clean energy and critical minerals partnership



PM Narendra Modi meets US NSA Jake Sullivan in New Delhi on Monday

dia-US partnership for global good. Sullivan briefed him on the progress in iCET cooperation in areas like AI, semiconductors, defence and space. In the meeting, Modi expressed satisfaction at the speed and scale of the growing partnership and the convergence on regional and global issues.

The NSAs exchanged views also on issues like the Russia-

Ukraine war and the conflict in Gaza. According to a joint fact-sheet issued after the meeting, Doval and Sullivan, in what was their second iCET talks, underscored the vital importance of adapting their "technology protection toolkits" and resolved to prevent leakage of sensitive and dual-use technologies to countries of concern. While neither side identified the countries of concern, US has been working to block the flow of technology to Russia, a country India continues to maintain strong defence ties with despite the promise of unprecedented transfer of technology from the US like in the GE-HAL deal for co-production of jet engines.

According to the factsheet, India and US will continue to chart an ambitious course for iCET. Doval and Sullivan also stressed the need for continued efforts, particularly under the Strategic Trade Dialogue, to address outstanding barriers to technology collaboration. They acknowledged progress in the GE-HAL jet deal negotiations, India's planned acquisition of MQ-9B Sea Guardian

drones and possible co-production of land warfare systems.

In defence, they focused on deepening cooperation to accelerate the joint adoption of cutting-edge commercial technologies for military solutions and capability enhancement of both defence ecosystems, including through an MoU, and expanding defence industrial partnerships, like through the launch of a jointly developed AI Multi-Domain Situational Awareness product.

"Our work also continues to be anchored in a shared commitment to ensuring that technology is designed, developed and deployed in a manner consistent with our democratic values, as well as a recognition that the future security and prosperity of the Indo-Pacific will hinge on the strength of the India-US relationship," the joint factsheet said.

Doval and Sullivan also underscored their commitment to striving for breakthrough achievements in priority critical and emerging technology areas by focusing on co-production, co-development and R&D opportunities.

Denied nod to fly as commander due to HIV+ status, trainee pilot tells HC

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Mumbai: An Indian trainee pilot (22) currently based in the US has moved Bombay high court over aviation regulator Directorate General of Civil Aviation's (DGCA) refusal to allow him to fly as pilot-in-command only because of his HIV status.

"The petitioner has no grievance with being subjected to extra or more frequent tests due to his HIV status, but is aggrieved that despite being medically fit, he is in principle denied permission to fly as pilot-in-command but only as co-pilot which will close all avenues of employment in India," states his petition, filed through his father.

According to his petition, in Nov 2020 he started preparation for the DGCA examina-



AIR POCKET IN CAREER PATH

tion to become a civil commercial pilot.

In July 2021 a medical test deemed him fit to serve as pilot-in-command. On Oct 8 2021, he cleared three DGCA examinations in the first attempt. After a medical test on Oct 14, he was informed about his HIV diagnosis. On Oct 21, he was issued a "temporarily

unfit for flying in the capacity of flight crew as a commercial pilot" certificate by the hospital. After further blood tests evaluation, on Dec 10, DGCA informed him that he is "permanently unfit for flying". On his appeal and after medical re-examination, in May 2022, DGCA issued a final certificate which deemed him as "fit for flying as P2 (co-pilot) only".

His petition said DGCA's refusal to permit him to fly as pilot-in-command will jeopardise his chance of being employed with any aviation company which is a clear violation of his fundamental rights to equality, profession and life. It violates the International Civil Aviation Organisation Manual of Aviation Medicine, and Section 3 of (Prohibition of discrimination) HIV and AIDS (Preven-

tion and Control) Act, it said.

The petition said despite his HIV status, on March 24, 2023, the US Federal Aviation Administration declared him fit to fly and he is currently training for instrument rating and commercial licence. "...DGCA is arbitrarily and unfairly not granting the petitioner permission to be pilot in command while the petitioner is facing no such impediment in the US," his petition added.

He urged HC to quash DGCA's May 2022 certificate and to direct it to carry out his fitness test based on physical health and without prejudice to his HIV status. On June 10, his advocate told the court that his training will be over soon. DGCA and ministry of civil aviation sought time to reply to the petition. Next hearing is on July 1.

Rape accused gets 16-day bail to wed survivor

Bengaluru: Karnataka HC has granted bail for 16 days to a 23-year-old man arrested under Pooja Act, allowing him to marry an 18-year-old girl he has been accused of raping and with whom he fathered a child when she was a minor.

Treating it as a "peculiar" case, Justice M Nagaprasanna has directed authorities to release the petitioner from Mysuru city jail on June 17 so that the couple gets married and their one-year-old child doesn't "suffer ignominy of any kind". The accused will have to return to prison on July 3. "The certificate of evidence of marriage should be placed before the court on the next date of hearing (July 4)," the judge said.

The court explained that "to protect the interest of the child and also the responsibility of the mother in bringing up the child, this direction is found necessary to be issued". TNN

UNITED IN FAITH



Kashmiri Muslims offer Eid prayers outside Hazratbal shrine on the outskirts of Srinagar on Monday

Faith clashes with duty, Kuno cheetah trackers skip work

P.Naveen@timesgroup.com

Bhopal: The cheetah mission has run into a spot of bother. Around 30 villagers hired to monitor cheetahs at Kuno National Park in Madhya Pradesh's Sheopur district have gone on strike.

These villagers, primarily from Yadav and Gurjar communities and recruited as trackers for their intimate knowledge of the lay of the land, are refusing to slaughter animals to feed the cheetahs brought from Africa in 2022 and housed in the park's soft-release enclosures, known as "bomas".

Paid approximately Rs 9,000 a month and working in shifts to track cheetahs round-the-clock, the trackers were recently tasked with slaughtering goats and buffaloes for the animals. This new duty clashed with their religious beliefs, leading them to strike and seek redress from CM Mohan Yadav's office in Bhopal.

"...Our demands are clear—we will not participate in preparing animals for cheetah feeding," one tracker said. Each tracker was assigned a specific cheetah, developing a unique understanding of their ward's behaviour. This bond, while challenging to form



The trackers were recently tasked with slaughtering goats and buffaloes for the animals

with wild animals, was instrumental in data collection and cheetah acclimatisation efforts. They had become familiar with the cheetahs' habits.

The decision to involve trackers in slaughtering was intended to streamline this process but has backfired due to their refusal. This unexpected strike disrupts cheetah-tracking programme, though officials assert that immediate impact is minimal as most cheetahs are in secure enclosures.

The striking villagers have two demands: comprehensive insurance coverage and exemption from slaughter duties. Although they couldn't meet CM, they submitted pleas to his OSD, who then consulted with park officers.

Humans eat more than 100bn animals every year, according to media reports.

Man jumps to death during DRI quizzing

Nagpur: Deepak Desai (27), accused of smuggling gold, jumped on Saturday from the sixth floor office of the DRI deputy director at CGO Complex in Seminary Hills, killing himself during an ongoing investigation, reports Soumitra Bose, Maharashtra criminal investigation department officers visited the DRI office on Monday for preliminary inquiry.

Desai and Sunil Ghodke were caught from the Mumbai-bound Duronto Express following a tip-off when it reached Nagpur station on Saturday, said police. The two, who had gold worth more than Rs 2.2 crore, were taken to the DRI office from the station. While 483 gm of gold hidden in eight bedsheets was recovered from Desai, DRI sleuths had seized 3 kg gold from Ghodke, said a police source.

The two were headed from Kolkata to Mumbai's Zaveri Bazaar, which is the routine modus operandi of gold smugglers. Desai was rushed to Mayo Hospital but declared dead. Gittikhan police have registered a case of accidental death.

Police sources said Desai's family have levelled allegations of foul play against DRI officials. The investigation is now likely to be transferred to either the state CID or city police crime branch. According to state CID sources, an ASP visited the place after a report from Gittikhan police alerted them about the incident.

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Terrorist killed in Bandipora, Hizb cadre held in Handwara

Search Op On At Encounter Site For More Terrorists

Saleem.Pandit
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Srinagar: An unidentified terrorist was killed in an encounter in north Kashmir's Bandipora district, while a Hizbul Mujahideen operative was arrested in Handwara in Kupwara district on Monday. The developments came a day after Union home minister Amit Shah held a review meeting in the wake of back-to-back terror attacks in Jammu, and directed security agencies to take steps to replicate in Jammu division the success achieved in containing terrorism in the Valley.

The gunfight broke out in the Gurihajin area of Aragam in Bandipora on Sunday night after the Army and J&K Police personnel, based on specific intelligence input, launched a joint cordon and search operation and were fired upon by the terrorists, Army's Srinagar-based Chinara Corps said in a post on X.

While one body was spotted



Security personnel at the site of encounter in Bandipora district

CDS reviews security situation in Jammu

Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) General Anil Chauhan on Monday reviewed security situation and operational preparedness in J&K in the wake of back-to-back terrorist attacks in the Jammu region, reports **Sanjay Khajuria**. He visited Srinagar-based Chinara 15 Corps and 16 Corps Hq in Jammu's Nagrota where top Army commanders briefed him, a source said.

ated at the encounter site, searches were on to look for more terrorists in the area, an official said, adding that the identity of the slain terrorist was yet to be ascertained.

In Kupwara's Handwara sub-district, security forces arrested a Hizbul Mujahideen terrorist in a joint operation launched Sunday night.

Zakir Hamid Mir, a resident of Kachri in Chogal, was in touch with a Pakistan-based handler, Z-

hoor Ahmad Mir of Mirtigam in Handwara.

Handwara SP Dawood Ayoub said police received information about the presence of a terrorist waiting to carry out a terror attack, following which an operation was launched in coordination with Army's 30 RR and other security agencies, and he was nabbed. A Chinese pistol, a hand grenade and two pistol magazines were recovered from Zakir's possession.

MHA asks NIA to probe Reasi attack that left 9 pilgrims dead

Jammu: Union home ministry has handed over investigation of the June 9 Reasi bus terror attack to the National Investigation Agency, official sources said on Monday, reports **Sanjay Khajuria**. The attack took place near the Teryath-Pouni axis and resulted in the deaths of nine pilgrims and injuries to 41 others.

"The decision to hand over the probe to NIA was taken after a high-level meeting chaired by Union home minister Amit Shah in New Delhi on June 15," the sources said. "NIA took over the case from J&K Police and registered an FIR in the matter following orders issued by the home ministry in view of the seriousness of the incident," they added.

J&K Police have announced a Rs 20 lakh reward for information on the terrorists and have also released a sketch. Police have also detained around 50 people for questioning in connection with the probe.

1.05 lakh affected as rain wreaks havoc in Assam

Guwahati: Rivers inundated extensive tracts of land, breaching embankments in multiple districts in lower and west Assam, while torrential downpour in the last 24 hours led to widespread flooding in numerous areas across south and lower Assam and artificial inundation in parts of Guwahati city, reports **Kangkan Kalita**.

In the last 24 hours (till 8.30am on Monday), Williamnagar in Meghalaya had very heavy rainfall, at 22 cm, followed by 19 cm in Kokrajhar; and 15 cm each in Karimganj and Nalbari districts.

IMD on Monday issued a state-wise warning map for

the northeast region, with a "red alert" in effect for Assam and Meghalaya for Tuesday and Wednesday, while Arunachal Pradesh has one for Wednesday.

The Assam State Disaster Management Authority on Monday evening stated that 1.05 lakh people in the state are currently affected by floods, with nearly 95,000 people in Karimganj district alone. Over 3,000 people are taking shelter in relief camps in Karimganj. Nearly 5,000 people are affected in Nagaon district. The Regional Meteorological Centre of IMD said rainfall would intensify over Assam during June 17-21.

BSY quizzed for 3.5 hrs, denies harassment

Former Karnataka CMB S Yediyurappa denied allegations he had sexually harassed a minor girl, saying during three and a half hours of questioning by a CID team on Monday that he had been "only trying" to help her legally in an earlier sex assault case since the 17-year-old girl and her mother were from his family's home constituency of Shikaripur. A team headed by SP Sarah Fathima and DSP Puneeth Kumar R questioned him at the CID office from 11am to 2.30pm. Sources said the officers have not told Yediyurappa whether he has to appear again before them. TNN

Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises
MSME - TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENT CENTRE
Process & Product Development Centre, Agra
Government of India Society (EFC New Delhi)

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Course Fees :- Rs. 4500/-

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Venue: Br. MSME DFO, 2nd floor, MSME-TDC PPDC, EFC New Delhi, Opp. Haldiram L Block, Outer Circle Connaught Place, New Delhi - 110001

For More Details, Course Content and Online Registration
Contact Number - 9810371728, 7983607199, 9677692445
E-mail- kathir.r@dcmsme.gov.in, msmeppdcdclhi@gmail.com

Certificate will be awarded.

SUPREME COURT OF INDIA
CASH & ACCOUNTS-II

NOTICE to nationalized banks for investment of an amount of **Rs. 30,38,70,736/- (Rs. Thirty Crore Thirty Eight Lakh Seventy Thousand Seven Hundred Thirty Six only plus interest accrued thereon)** IN FIXED DEPOSIT.

All the Nationalized Banks are informed that the above mentioned amount is to be invested in Fixed Deposit for a period of **01 YEAR**. Interested Nationalized Banks are requested to quote in sealed cover, the highest rate of interest valid till **24.06.2024**, for this deposit in accordance with the prescribed format and hand over personally to the undersigned upto **5.00 p.m. on 21.06.2024**. No offer will be accepted after **5.00 p.m.**

For more details, prescribed format and instructions, log on to www.supremecourtfindia.nic.in

Place : New Delhi (TAPAN KISHORE SHARMA)
Date : 14.06.2024 Drawing & Disbursing Officer, Supreme Court of India

PUBLIC NOTICE
Abbott Diagnostics Medical Private Limited
CIN No.: U74899DL1995PTC069456

401, 4th Floor, BPTP Park Centra, Sector 30, Gurgaon 122001, Haryana, India
Email: techservices.IndiaOTC@abbott.com | Web: www.abbott.in

This notice serves to inform the public that Abbott Diagnostics Medical Pvt. Ltd., will be discontinuing the distribution and sales of Panbio™ Antigen COVID-19 self-test kits in India effective from **June 25, 2024**. The efficiency and efficacy of the test remain unaffected, but as the NAVICA India self-reporting mobile application is also being discontinued from **June 25, 2024**, the results cannot be reported to the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), which is a mandatory requirement. Abbott is providing the option for customers to return their Panbio self-test kits with **Product Code # AF41FK51PP; Batch no. 41ADH668AT, expiry date January 28, 2025** for a refund. Please reach out to the customer service desk at **+91-8655731546** if you would like to return your kit for a refund. For any other product or technical support questions, please contact our customer care at **1800-309-0180** or email us at techservices.IndiaOTC@abbott.com

IN THE HIGH COURT OF KARNATAKA AT BENGALURU
ORIGINAL JURISDICTION
IN THE MATTER OF COMPANIES ACT, 1956
AND
IN THE MATTER OF M/S. MAGNUM INTERGRAFIKS
PRIVATE LIMITED (In liquidation)
COMPANY APPLICATION NO. 22 / 2024
IN
COMPANY APPLICATION NO. 207/2021
IN
COMPANY PETITION NO. 148/2015

BETWEEN:
Official Liquidator of
M/s. Magnum Intergrafiks Pvt. Ltd. (In Liqn.)
Attached to High Court of Karnataka,
Corporate Bhavan, Nos.26-27, 12th Floor,
Raheja Towers, M.G. Road,
Bangalore - 560 001. ... Applicant

-Vs-
GM Communication,
Block No.12, Rohini,
New Delhi-110089 ... Respondent

NOTICE
To,
GM Communication,
Block No.12, Rohini,
New Delhi-110089

Whereas the applicant above named has made an application to this Court Under Rule 6 & 9 of the Companies (Court) Rules, 1959 read with rule 20 & 20(1a) order 5 of the Code of Civil Procedure, praying to summon the Respondent herein for purpose of examination with regard to the matter specified therein and etc.,

Notice is hereby given to you to appear before this Court in person or through Advocate duly instructed on the **04.07.2024 at 10.30. A.M.** to show cause against the application, failing which the matter will be decided on its merits.

Given under my hand & seal of this Court this 06th day of JUNE 2024.

BY ORDER OF THE COURT
ASSISTANT REGISTRAR
High Court of Karnataka, Bangalore

APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION

General public is hereby informed that this person (depicted in the photo) **Name:** Unknown, **S/o:** Unknown, **R/o:** Unknown, **Age:** About 45 Years, **Sex:** Male, **Height:** 5.6", **Complexion:** Shallow, **ID Mark:** A mole on left hypochondrium **Wearing:** White Shirt with Orange stripes, Black pant and shoes in feet,

found dead near Delhi Cantt. metro station, Asha School footpath, Delhi on 15.06.2024 under area of P.S. Naraina, Delhi.

In this regard a **DD No. 58A, dated 15.06. 2024** has been lodged at P.S. Naraina, Delhi.

Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out information about this person but no clue has come to light so far.

If any person having any information or clue about this person may kindly inform to the following.

SHO
P.S.- Naraina, Delhi.
DP/7504/WD/2024 Ph.: 011-25891181, 8750871122



Government of India



The new government's first task... Honouring India's farmers

Prime Minister Narendra Modi to release 17th installment of PM Kisan Samman Nidhi through direct transfer of more than ₹20 thousand crores to the accounts of more than 9.26 crore beneficiary farmers and grant Certification of Krishi Sakhis as Agriculture Para-extension Workers

18th June, 2024 at 5:00 pm Venue: Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh

PM-Kisan Samman Nidhi

Till now, more than **₹ 3.03 lakh crores** have been transferred directly to the bank accounts of more than **11 crore farmers**

Beneficiary farmers receive **₹ 6,000** per year in three equal installments

A comprehensive grievance redressal mechanism and centralized helpdesk to resolve the problems of the beneficiaries

Krishi Sakhi Programme

To become a **Krishi Sakhi**, women of Self Help Groups are trained in various aspects of agriculture

Till now **34,000** Krishi Sakhis have been certified as Para-extension workers

Krishi Sakhi programme is a part of the 'Lakshpati Didi' campaign

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AgriGol



PM-Kisan Helpline No. 155261



PM-Kisan Helpdesk <https://pmkisan.gov.in/Grievance.aspx>

For more information on this Scheme Scan QR code



CBC 01102/1900012425

Locals were first responders, Siliguri rains hit rescue op at train crash site

► Continued from P 1

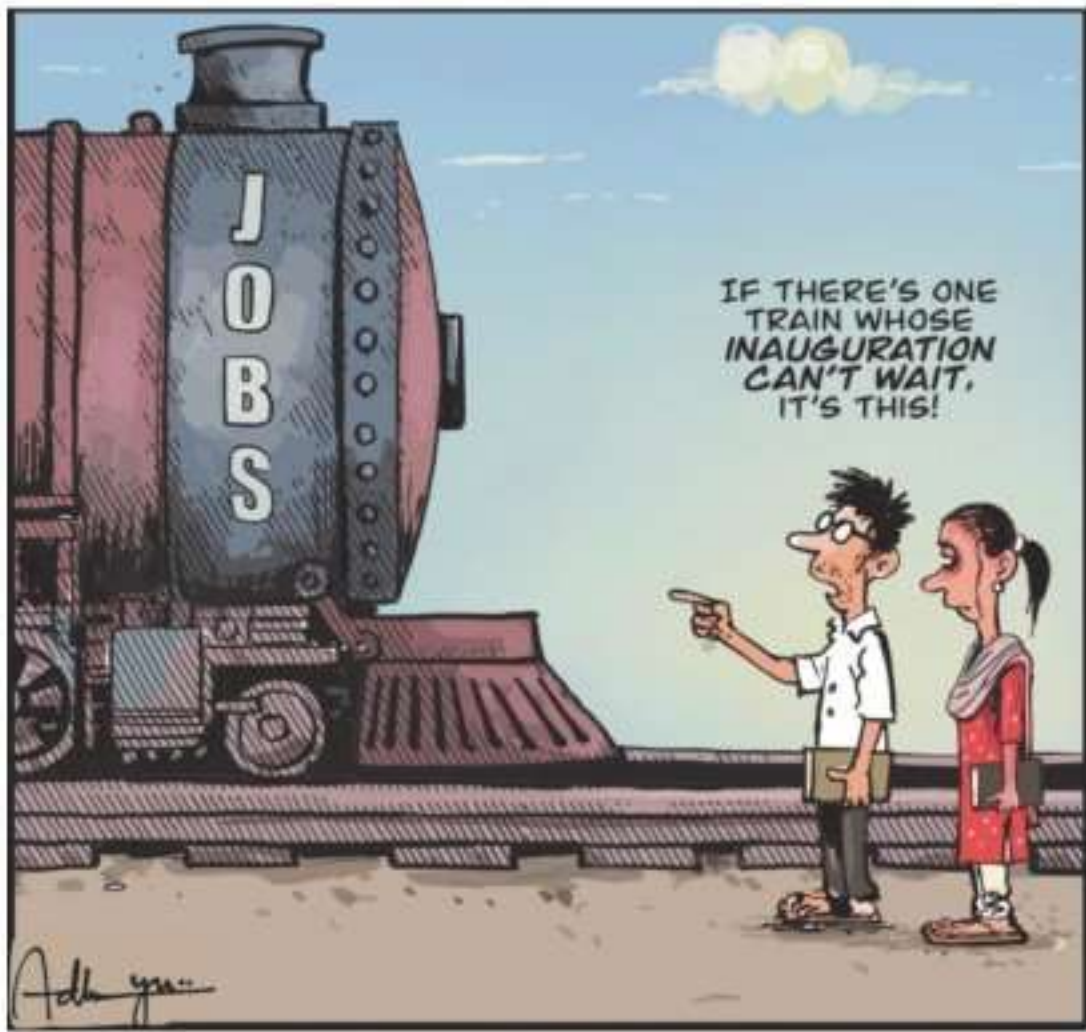
The PMO first announced compensation of Rs 2 lakh to the families of each of the deceased. Vaishnav later said families of each of the deceased would receive Rs 10 lakh and those who suffered serious injuries would get Rs 2.5 lakh each. For minor injuries, the amount is Rs 50,000.

Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee accused the railways of not caring for passenger safety. "They are only keen on hiking fares," she said.

A passenger in one of the compartments in the middle said he felt a huge jolt, followed by pandemonium. "Passengers were running helter-skelter. There were screams all around. We got off the train and ran towards the rear. What we saw was shocking. One bogie had turned over, another appeared to be hanging in the air. A third was mangled."

The first responders were

TOI LINE OF NO CONTROL **SANDEEP ADHWARYU**
OVER 1,70,000 POSTS IN SAFETY CATEGORY VACANT IN RAILWAYS



local residents. Police, railway and administrative officials reached the spot later along with NDRF personnel. Heavy

rains in Siliguri since morning hampered rescue work. A control room has been set up at New Jalpaiguri.

Operational on just 1,500km now, Kavach could have prevented mishap

The fatal rail accident in Darjeeling has once again brought focus back on faster deployment of the indigenously developed train anti-collision system, Kavach. Had the system been put in place on this route, the accident could have been avoided as the passenger and freight trains were on the same track, reports **Dipak Dash**.

In her first reaction after the accident, railway board CEO and chairperson Jaya Verma Sinha said the accident seems to have been a consequence of human error and Kavach is the most important intervention to check such errors. "We need to proliferate this and it's being done on a mission mode. It's operational on around 1,500 km. Another 3,500 km will be covered during this financial year and 3,000 km more has been planned for next year. We need to gradually build up the capacity for roll this out across the country. The suppliers also need to ramp up their production," she said.

Guard cuts short leave to join duty, dies

The guard of Kanchenjunga Express had cut short his leave to resume his duty on Monday, just hours before the train crash killed him. Ashish Dey (48), a resident of Sukantapally in Bengla, left home at 6.15 am, bidding farewell to his wife, while his only daughter was asleep. Three hours later, his wife saw the sad news on TV. **TNN**

On June 2 last year, a speeding Coromandel Express had dashed into a stationary goods train. The derailed coaches

had come in the way of the Bengaluru-Howrah Superfast, turning into a three-train pileup that killed 300 people.

'In seconds, quiet compartment was filled with screams'

Biswendu Bhattacharjee

Agartala: It was 8.50am on a wet Monday morning. Kamal Chowdhury was sitting in the lower berth of S9 coach of the ill-fated Sealdah-bound Kanchenjunga Express sipping his morning tea when the train suddenly lurched forward with great force. The impact was so powerful that his 11-year-old nephew Rajat, who was still asleep, was thrown off the upper berth into his lap.

"The train came to an abrupt halt, with passengers thrown about here and there. In a matter of seconds, the quiet compartment was filled with screams of panic-stricken and injured passengers,"



Chowdhury, a senior journalist from Tripura, recounted on the phone. He was travelling to Bengal's Nadia district along with six of his family members to attend a wedding. "From the window, I could see a horde of people rushing towards the train. I got down to find out what had happened," he said. The scene that unfolded before him was of chaos and confusion, as two carriages of another train had mounted the rear of Kanchenjunga Express.

Only a few passengers were awake at the time of the accident. "Everyone in our coach was injured. Fortunately, there were no fatalities in our coach," he said.

'Totally parentless': Didi says govt keen on only hiking fares

Alleging that the railways have become "totally parentless", West Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee on Monday claimed that it was only keen on increasing fares and not improving passenger amenities. Banerjee visited the North Bengal Medical College and Hospital in Siliguri and met the victims of the train accident near Rangapani, and directed the district administration to extend every possible assistance to them.

"Though the ministry is there, the old glory is missing. Only beautification is being done," she told reporters. "You will only see them talk big. They also do not take care of the railway officers, technical, safety, and security personnel. I am with the railway employees and officers," she added. **PTI**

Cong: Rly converted into platform of self-promotion

Accusing the Modi govt of "utter mismanagement" of railways which has resulted in an increase in train accidents over last ten years, Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge and Rahul Gandhi Monday attacked the BJP regime, and stated that they will hold it accountable for its negligence. Kharge said, "As a responsible Opposition, it is our bounden duty to underline how the Modi Govt has systematically converted the rail ministry into a platform of 'Camera-driven' self-promotion. Today's tragedy is yet another reminder of this stark reality." Gandhi said, "The increase in railway accidents in the last 10 years is a direct result of the mismanagement of the Modi government." **TNN**

TWIST OF FATE

Train direction reversal turns tragic for some, lucky for others

Jalpaiguri: A scheduled operational procedure at Lumding, which involves a direction reversal for trains passing through the station, turned into a life-altering event for passengers in the front and last coaches of Agartala-Sealdah Kanchenjunga Express on Monday.

The train was struck from behind by a goods train at Rangapani. The direction reversal at Lumding in Assam meant that the coaches which were initially at the front became the rear end of the train.

A passenger in a sleeper coach located in the middle of the rake said, "The affected coaches were in the front till Lumding." He explained that after the reversal, the affected four coaches — a general coach, two parcel vans, and a guard van — were at the rear end. The general coach was the most affected, being thrown onto adjacent tracks, he added. **PTI**

Travelling sans reservation, man standing at door survives

New Jalpaiguri: Thirty-five-year-old Ashish Das didn't get a seat in the general compartment of the 13174 DN (Silchar-Sealdah) Kanchenjunga Express, so he stood at the gate. At the moment of the collision, he "instinctively" jumped off. The crash left at least five in his compartment dead and 46 injured. Though shaken, Das escaped with minor bruises after he fell onto a soggy patch of ground, reports **Pinak Priya Bhattacharya**.

Das said, "I usually visit my house in Burdwan's Lohapur once every month. Since it was all last moment, I couldn't get a reservation and had no option but to board the general compartment," he said.

CEO cites loco pilot 'error', others blame signal snag

Ajanta Chakraborty & Dipak Dash | TNN

Kolkata/New Delhi: Theories about a possible signalling discrepancy being responsible for a goods train rear-ending the Sealdah-bound Kanchenjunga Express in north Bengal Monday contrasted with the official version put out by Railway Board chairperson and CEO Jaya Varma Sinha, blaming "human error" by the deceased loco pilot of the cargo rake for the disaster.

The Railway Board chief told reporters in New Delhi that, prima facie, the loco pilot of the goods train disregarded a PLCT, or paper line clear ticket, before hitting the passenger train from the rear. "There were two parcel vans ahead, because of which there was no

more damage than what has already happened."

A copy of the PLCT (T/A 912) issued to the loco pilot by the stationmaster of Rangapani surfaced later in the day, authorising him to cross all red signals. "Automatic signalling has failed and you are hereby authorised to pass all automatic signals between RNI (Rangapani Railway Station) and CAT (Chater Hat Junction)," the note states.

A railway official said a loco pilot was required to approach a red signal at 10 kmph, halt close to the signal, wait a minute during daytime and two minutes at night, and then resume at 10-15 kmph. "Also, after passing the signal, the loco pilot must ensure that a minimum distance of 150 metres is maintained between his train and the preceding one or any

obstruction along the line."

Various reports suggested that the automatic signalling system on the Rangapani stretch of the route, around 30km from New Jalpaiguri station, had been malfunctioning for some time, necessitating the use of PLCT as an alternative.

"Employees manning the control rooms were aware of the snag as stationmasters on that stretch would issue paper signals for all passing trains. Two trains couldn't have entered the same track without receiving a PLCT for that specific line," a source said.

A PLCT is a document that allows trains to proceed on a single line section when a block instrument fails but communication between stations is still available.

The stationmaster, after co-

ordinating with the up and down stations, gives the all-clear to an oncoming train. The signal man holds up a racket-like contraption containing the chit of paper for the loco pilot's assistant to collect even as the train is in motion.

"Only a detailed inquiry can reveal what actually happened. The question doing the rounds is whether a PLCT each was at all issued to the trains that collided. Why would a loco pilot disregard a PLCT?" a retired railway engineer wondered.

PTI reported that the automatic signalling system between Ranipatna station and Chatter Hat junction, where the goods train hit the Kanchenjunga Express, had been defective since 5.40am Monday.

But sources said the snag occurred much before that be-

cause of inclement weather.

According to norms, the driver who is issued a PLCT is supposed to stop the train for a minute at each defective signal and then proceed at a speed not higher than 10kmph.

V Balachandran, central organising secretary of the All-India Loco Running Staff Association, said that until the Commissioner of Railway Safety's report or the departmental fact-finding inquiry came to a conclusion, it was not advisable to put the blame on anyone. "It will influence the inquiry to divert it as an error by the loco pilot in the eyes of the public and other railwaymen," he said.

The assistant loco pilot of the goods train survived the collision but is not in a condition to have his statement recorded, officials said.

HC orders probe into juvenile court functioning after clerk flouts its order

Rosy, Sequeira@timesgroup.com

Mumbai: Bombay high court has ordered the principal district judge, Thane, to conduct a detailed inquiry into the functioning and administration of the juvenile court at Bhiwandi, after a clerk refused to accept a chargesheet and insisted on the presence of the juvenile in conflict with law.

"We strongly condemn this conduct of Sudhir Pawar and find the conduct of the registry of the said court disgraceful. It clearly amounts to interference in the smooth administration of criminal justice. It also appears to us that the presiding judicial officer has no control over her court and, therefore her role also needs to be examined by the principal district judge," said Justices Ajay Gadkari and Neele Gokhale in the June 13 order.

On a plea of the juvenile for quashing the FIR, the HC on Dec 13, 2023 permitted police to file the chargesheet on completing probe as early as possible. On April 8, the investigating officer (IO) was granted liberty to file the chargesheet without insisting on the presence of the juvenile in conflict with law.

On June 11, the prosecutor brought to the judges' notice the



'DISGRACEFUL CONDUCT'

"disturbing fact" that despite two consecutive orders of HC, the IO was obstructed from filing the chargesheet. The judges noted that the April 8 order "clearly expected" the staff of the juvenile court and the presiding officer to accept the chargesheet in the absence of the juvenile in conflict with law. They then directed the IO to file his affidavit placing the facts on record.

The judges said the IO's affidavit is "self eloquent and clear and needs no further explanation." They said, prima facie, Pawar has "blatantly flouted" orders passed by HC. "He has displayed total disregard for our orders. It is unfortunate to note that even that presiding officer of that court, namely Seema Ghute is either oblivious or has feigned deliberate ignorance thereto," they added.

Before passing further orders and initiating action for contempt

Civic commissioners face Gujarat HC fire for Rajkot, Morbi tragedies

The Gujarat HC has noted that the slew of tragic incidents such as the 2022 Morbi suspension bridge collapse, Rajkot game zone fire and Vadodara boat tragedy this year show public places of amusement with high tourist footfall have been kept unsafe because of the dereliction of duties by the respective municipal commissioners. A division bench of Chief Justice Sunita Agarwal and Justice Pranav Trivedi, in an order, directed the state government to conduct an inquiry into the working of municipal corporations in view of the recent incidents. **PTI**

of court, the judges ordered an inquiry. They directed it to be completed within a week and the report to be submitted on June 26. They also granted the principal district judge liberty to suspend Pawar during pendency of the inquiry "and/or to adopt any other appropriate legal remedy which he/she deems appropriate in completing the inquiry expeditiously."

CM conspicuous by his absence at Manipur meet chaired by Shah

► Continued from P 1

Incidentally, Kuki leaders said to have resisted sitting across the table with Meiteis under the current Manipur regime led by chief minister N Biren Singh. Singh, interestingly, was conspicuous by his absence at Monday's meeting, the first after BJP lost both Lok Sabha seats in the state. Home ministry sources insisted that the review was limited to the level of officials, which included adviser to Manipur govt Kuldeep Singh, state chief secretary and DGP, Army chief Gen Manoj Pande, Army chief-designate Lt Gen Upendra Dwivedi, Assam Rifles DG and senior officers of the MHA.

Singh, in recent media interviews, had spoken about the need for "central forces to actively support the state's initiatives". There have also been rumblings that the state security set-up had failed to act on alerts from the CM's office about possible ethnic flare-up in Jiribam, which police sources refuted as baseless, citing the five-month gap between the alerts sent



Biren Singh offers prayers at Shree Govindajee temple in Imphal on Monday

in Jan and the tension in Jiribam. A senior IPS officer said the situation in Jiribam was under control and the movement of essential goods resumed 2-3 days ago.

An MHA statement following Monday's review also underlined that "government of India has been actively supporting the Manipur govt in strengthening the security situation in the state".

Shah asked officials to adopt a "coordinated approach" to resolve the ethnic conflict. He said deployment levels of central para-

military forces may be increased, if required, and that they must be strategically deployed to restore peace and tranquillity in the affected areas. "No further incident of violence should take place in Manipur," he directed and called for strict action as per law against the perpetrators.

Sources told **TOI** that central forces, now back in the state after deployment for the Lok Sabha polls, are dynamically deployed to cover vulnerable areas. Also, efforts to locate and recover the rest of the 6,000 weapons looted last year will be intensified in the days to come. As many as 2,141 weapons have been recovered so far.

Stating that the Modi govt was fully committed to ensuring safety and security of all citizens of Manipur, Shah also reviewed the situation in relief camps housing people displaced by the ethnic violence. He took stock of the availability of food, water, medicines and other basic amenities and directed the state chief secretary to ensure proper health and education facilities for displaced people as well as their rehabilitation.

Modi likely to propose Speaker name on June 25

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: After new members' oath-taking is completed on the first two days of Lok Sabha session, Prime Minister Narendra Modi is likely to propose the name of the new Lok Sabha Speaker on June 25 even as the BJP-led NDA, which has the majority, has still not announced its candidate's name.

The first session of the 18th Lok Sabha is scheduled to commence from June 24 to July 3 and is likely to be reconvened in the last week of July for the Budget session. Sources said that BJP is likely to retain the Speaker's post and not offer it to allies as it has far greater numbers than the NDA partners.

Since the President has notified June 26 as the date for the Speaker's election, it is expected that the PM will propose the name for a consensus a day in advance, as all Speakers have so far been elected with a consensus. However, the opposition has threatened to field a candidate this time in case the post of deputy Lok Sabha Speaker is not given to them.

In the 12th Lok Sabha, un-

der former PM Atal Bihari Vajpayee — which lasted for 13 months, from March 10, 1998 to April 26, 1999 — TDP leader G M C Balayogi was elected the Speaker in March 1998. He held the post for five years until 2002.

In 2002, during the full five-year term (1999-2004) of the BJP-led NDA government of Atal Bihari Vajpayee as PM, Shiv Sena's Manohar Joshi

was elected Speaker after the death of Balayogi in 2002.

In 2014 under the leadership of Narendra Modi, BJP alone won a total of 282 seats, more than the magic figure while together with NDA, its total strength in the LS was 336. The Party nominated Sumitra Mahajan for the post. In 2019, it improved its tally winning 303 seats on its own while the NDA tally was 353. Om Birla was nominated the Speaker in 2019.

Even in 2024, BJP is the single largest party with 240 seats, 32 seats short of the majority mark. However, the party is better placed than the Vajpayee era when it could not cross the 200 figure and its survival was critically dependent on the allies.



Did Sullivan discuss Pannun with Doval? No one is talking

► Continued from P 1

The group of Democrat Senators asked US govt to match words with action

to hold the Indian officials involved accountable, and to send a "clear message" that there will be consequences for such behaviour. "It is imperative we take an unequivocal stand against such a threat to the rights of a US citizen and violation of US sovereignty, which are examples of India's increasingly irresponsible efforts to silence critics of its government among its diaspora around the world," the senators said in their official communication.

Earlier, the Czech justice minister said he approved the extradition on June 3. Sullivan has been pursuing the case with India, saying on several occasions that US takes it very seriously and has been pressing India to act against the official who allegedly mas-

terminated the plot. He said last week that US will continue to raise the issue with India at very high levels.

Sullivan was widely expected to raise the issue in his meetings on Monday but both sides were tight-lipped about whether he actually did that. This was the first time he met his counterpart Ajit Doval since the US justice department announced charges against Gupta.

Gupta is charged with murder-for-hire and conspiracy to commit murder-for-hire. Each count carries a maximum statutory penalty of 10 years in prison. According to the indictment, the Indian govt employee, working together with others, including Gupta, in India and elsewhere, directed a plot to assassinate Pannun. The issue was raised by President Biden himself in his meeting with PM Narendra Modi on the margins of the G20 summit in Delhi last year.

Office of the Superintending Engineer, Mainpuri Circle, P.W.D., Mainpuri (U.P.) SHORT TERM INVITATION FOR BIDS (IFB) {E-Tender}						
Letter No.: 2219/camp/7M-Mainpuri Circle/2024			Dated: 10.06.2024			
1. The Superintending Engineer, Mainpuri Circle, P.W.D., Mainpuri (U.P.) invites item rate bids from the registered contractors Category "A" (Road) of U.P.P.W.D. online for the construction of work detailed in the table given below. The bidders are advised to examine carefully all instructions including addendum/amendments to ITB, conditions of contract, contract data, forms, terms, technical specifications, bill of quantities etc. in the Standard Bid Document.						
Sl. No.	District/Division	Name of Work	Estimated cost (Rs. in Lacs)	Bid Security (Rs. in Lacs)	Cost of Document (in Rs.)	Time of Completion
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	Mainpuri/Provincial Division	Renewal of Kurra Bhanwat Elaau Bogaon road, Km. 1, 2,3 (800), 4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11, 12,13,14,15,16,20,21,22,23, 24,25,26,27,28,29,30,31 & 32	545.00	10.90	Stationery Charges Rs. 2000.00+Rs. 300 (Tender Fee) + 414.00 GST= Rs. 2714.00	8 Months
3. Bid document with detailed terms and conditions will be available online on website http://etender.up.nic.in from 19.06.2024 to 04.07.2024 upto 12:00 Hours. Bids must be submitted online only at e-tendering portal of http://etender.up.nic.in on or before 12:00 Hours on 04.07.2024 Technical Bid received online will be opened on 04.07.2024 at 12:30 Hours.						
4. Principal Secretary, Directorate of geology & mining Uttar Pradesh Letter No-2146/86-2019-52(IK0)/2019 Dt. 30.09.2019 and other relevant Government orders, circulars will be applicable to bidders.						
5. Bid Security of Column No. 5 and Cost of Bid Documents as per column No. 6 will be paid by Internet Banking of E-tender portal Account as per G.O. No.-317/23-2-2018-176 No./2006 T.C-1 dt. 10-04-2019.						
6. Other conditions can be seen in Standard Bidding Document (SBD).						
7. Procedure of tender should be done by Prahari App Approved by Government of U.P.						
8. Pre-bid meeting will be held on dated 24.06.2024 at 12:00 hours at the Office of the Superintending Engineer, Mainpuri Circle, P.W.D. Mainpuri (U.P.) to clarify the issues and to answer questions on any matter related to bid.						
9. The Contractor Shall be liable for the maintenance of the road for the next five years after its completion as per G.O No. 17/2024/Sa-113/23-1-2024-23-1099/113/2023 Dated 16.01.2024 and E IN C's Letter No. 36890/UPRMC/Moot-23-24 Dated 17.02.2024.						
10. Undersigned will have full right to cancel the tender without assigning any reason..						
(A.K. Arun) Executive Engineer Provincial Division P.W.D. Mainpuri			(V.K. Chaudhary) SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER Mainpuri CIRCLE P.W.D. MAINPURI (For and on behalf of Governor of UP)			
UPID-206193/15.06.2024 www.upgov.nic.in						

Office of Superintending Engineer, Moradabad Circle, P.W.D. Moradabad Short Term E-Procurement Notice Inviting Tender (Second Invitation)							
No. - 2748 /Nivida-Moradabad/23-24				Date: 11.06.2024			
On behalf of the Governor of UP, tender for following work are invited by the Superintending Engineer, Moradabad Circle, PWD Moradabad online on website http://etender.up.nic.in from registered contractors In column No-8 from 20.06.2024 at 10.00 am to 26.06.2024 at 12:00 pm. Amount mentioned in column no. 5 & 7 shall be mandatory deposited by Net Banking Only through E-tender portal. Technical bid / Prequalification of tenders shall be opened on 26.06.2024 at 12:30 pm in office of undersigned by tender committee in presence of authorised representatives/bidders who wish to be present. Financial bid of the tenderers who qualify in technical bid shall be opened on date and time as specified by a notice in the office of undersigned. In case of Government holiday the required process shall be carried out on next working day.							
Sl. No.	DISTRICT	Name of Work	Estimated cost (Rs. in Lacs)	Bid Security (Rs. in Lacs)	Time of completion of the work (Including rainy season)	Cost of tender documents including GST (RS.)	Category of road contractor eligible
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1	MBD	Renovation & repairing of Judges Colony (Distt. Judge Compound) in Moradabad.	219.31	12.97	5 Month	300+2000+54=2354	"A" (Building Category)
Rules/conditions & details of the tender are available at website http://etender.up.nic.in . Bidder have to login Prahari URL http://wms.upwd.gov.in/prahari/ and upload their documents As per G.O No.-879 (1) / 23-7-2020 dated 25-08-2020 and E-IN-C (Vikas) and Head of Department letter-4650 / 4NL-OC / 2020 dated 27.08.2020.							
(Mohd. Naved Ahmad Khan) Executive Engineer Provincial Division, PWD Moradabad				(S.P. Singh) Superintending Engineer Moradabad Circle, PWD Moradabad			
UPID-206175/15.06.2024 www.upgov.nic.in For and on behalf of Governor of UP							

PAN-India fraud? Scamsters target dead, farmers, women

Mumbai Homemaker Gets ₹1.3Cr Tax Notice, ITAT Orders Probe

Lubna.Kably@timesgroup.com

Mumbai: A Mumbai-based homemaker and senior citizen had to litigate up to the Income-tax Appellate Tribunal (ITAT) level over alleged misuse of her PAN after a tax officer held that she had sold immovable property of Rs 1.3 crore in 2010-11 and treated this as her income.

Illiterate and a cancer patient, the woman failed to respond to I-T notices. At a recent hearing before the ITAT, her counsel submitted that her PAN was misused in the property registration. The tribunal noted that the I-T officer had not conducted an independent inquiry, such as seeking details from the registrar of the property and the buyer. It ordered the I-T department to seek complete information from the registrar and provide the woman with a fair hearing.

This was not an isolated incident. Cases have been reported across India of misuse of PAN — be it Usha Soni in Betul, MP, to whom an I-T notice of Rs 7.5 crore was issued a decade after her death, or Nand Lal, a small shopkeeper in Rajasthan, who filed a police complaint after receiving an I-T notice of Rs 12.2 crore. The dead, senior citizens, farmers and students are easy targets for PAN fraudsters.

NO AUTO DEACTIVATION AFTER DEATH

- ▶ Check the annual information statement (AIS) at periodic intervals on incometax.gov.in
- ▶ If the income shown does not pertain to you, report it in the AIS system itself
- ▶ If not rectified, file a police complaint as it could indicate PAN misuse
- ▶ A police complaint can also provide support during litigation against an I-T notice
- ▶ On death of a family member, inform the relevant I-T officer to prevent PAN misuse

“Misuse of the PAN by unscrupulous elements can cause lots of difficulties, including huge demands being raised on an individual due to additions to his/her income during assessment for transactions that do not pertain to the PAN holder. While the highest secrecy must be maintained of one’s PAN, the reality is that details are freely shared for various purposes,” said Ketan Vajani, chartered accountant.

“Individuals should restrain from sharing PAN information/PAN card where it is not mandated by the govt’s guidelines or is in public domain,” Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) said in an email to a query by TOI. “The PAN database at present is more than 70 crores. Linking with Aadhaar was brought in largely to prevent/stop misuse of PAN. However, if there are cases of suspected misuse of PAN, it is advised that a complaint may be filed with the police.”

Against the backdrop of the ITAT order, Ameet Patel, tax partner at Manohar Chowdhry & Associates, said: “The issue of the I-T department relying completely on information filed by various agencies and initiating action against the taxpayers is a serious issue and needs a lot of rethinking by the department. It has now come to a stage that every taxpayer has to necessarily check his/her annual information statement (AIS) every few weeks.” AIS provides wide-ranging information received from reporting entities (banks and property registrars), such as bank interest, dividend, purchase and sale transactions of securities, or immovable properties.

“The moment someone finds a wrong entry in the AIS, it would be best to provide feedback in the AIS system immediately and point out the mistake. If the mistake is not rectified, the need to file an FIR with police arises,” said Patel.

According to Vajani, a police complaint could also act as a shield if, during assessment, additions are made for transactions that do not belong to the PAN holder. “It would be a taxpayer friendly move for the I-T department to provide a tab on its website to report any misuse,” he said.

CBDT, in its reply, explained that when the reporting entity confirms the transaction, unless the PAN holder reports the matter to police and the case is investigated, no consequent action can be taken by the I-T department.

It also said a PAN is not deactivated in the event of death of the holder so as to enable the I-T department to initiate or complete pending I-T proceedings, if any. However, family members/legal heirs of such a PAN holder need to intimate the death to the jurisdictional assessing officer (whose details are on the e-portal), with copies of the PAN card and the death certificate, post which the officer marks the death event against the PAN.

Patel suggested, “Once a death certificate is issued, there should be an automatic intimation to the I-T department, which, in turn, must immediately flag the PAN as being that of a deceased. No high value transactions should then be permitted against that PAN.”

Shimla faces acute water shortage as sources dry up, tourists add to woes

Anand.Bodh@timesgroup.com

Shimla: For those looking for an escape to the hills to beat the heat, Himachal Pradesh could present a new challenge — many parts of the state, including Shimla, are facing an acute water shortage due to absence of rainfall and water sources drying up due to heat. And a spike in tourist influx, that has increased water consumption, has only worsened matters.

Shimla is getting its supply of water every 3-4 days due to low availability, with civic authorities struggling to restore daily supply. Shimla requires 43 MLD (million litres per day) water but is getting around 30 MLD. Shimla has 276 registered hotels and an estimated 963 Airbnbs and homestays.

To meet the requirement of tourists, hotels buy water from private tankers and pay between Rs 2,000-5,000 per tanker, depending on the location of the hotel. There is no record of how homestays and residences hosting guests are managing water needs.

Shimla Hotels and Tourism Stakeholders’ Association president M K Seth said unprecedented hot weather conditions coupled with a prolonged dry spell has aggravated the issue.



Vehicles cross a waterlogged bridge in Mandi on Monday

1,826% rise in forest fires in state this year

There is no let-up in forest fires in Himachal Pradesh, as 2,004 blazes have already been recorded in what has become one of the worst summers for forests and wildlife across the state, reports Rohit Mullick. The fires have so far destroyed 22,466 hectares of land and caused an estimated loss of Rs 7.6 crore besides harming and unsettling wildlife. Compared to last year when only 104 forest fires were recorded during summer, the rise this year is 1,826%. According to forest department data, Dharamshala has recorded the most fires at 478, followed by Mandi with 328 fires, Hamirpur 243, Nahar 234, Solan 192, Chamba 144 and Shimla 143.

longed dry spell has aggravated the issue. “In the last couple of years, the supply used to remain normal and only a few tankers had to be purchased during peak tourist season.”

Shimla faced its worst-ever water crisis in the summer of 2018 as people struggled for water for several weeks, leading

to widespread agitation and protests against the then BJP govt in the state. In April 2019, the state cabinet approved formation of Shimla Jal Prabhandhan Nigam Limited (SJPNL) for water supply and wastewater management in Greater Shimla Planning Area. SJPNL initiated a project to draw 67

North to get respite from heat in 2 days

Heat wave to severe heat wave conditions are likely to continue over many parts of north India for the next two days and gradually abate thereafter under the influence of approaching western disturbance towards northwest India, IMD said Monday.

Northwest India, including Punjab, Haryana and Delhi-NCR may not see a significant change in maximum (day) temperatures during the next 24 hours. Day temperatures may, however, fall by about 2 degrees Celsius thereafter as IMD predicted isolated to scattered light rainfall with thunderstorm, lightning and gusty winds over J&K, Ladakh, Himachal, Uttarakhand, Punjab, Haryana, Delhi, UP and Rajasthan from June 18-20. TNN

HC: Consensual relationship is no licence to assault woman

Bengaluru: A consensual relationship is not a licence for a man to beat up a woman, Karnataka high court has observed while quashing rape and cheating charges against a techie brought by a colleague while retaining others related to thrashing her.

Justice M Nagaprasanna noted that both Bengaluru residents were in a relationship for over five years. In July 2022, the woman lodged a police complaint alleging the man had a physical relationship with her on the promise of marriage but breached it. Following this, a case was filed against him under IPC Sections 376 (rape), 323 (causing hurt), 417 (cheating), 504 (intentional insult) and 506 (criminal intimidation).

The man challenged the FIR in HC and argued that in 2020, the woman had filed a similar complaint against another person and it was pending. He claimed the woman had a habit of filing criminal complaints against different men.

The judge noted the rape and cheating charges cannot be sustained in the wake of the consensual relationship.

Referring to assault charges, the judge cited medical certificates pertaining to bruises on the woman’s body. “Offence under Sections 323 (causing hurt) and 504 (insult) are prima facie met,” the judge said. TNN

NCERT books now an embarrassment, say Yadav, Palshikar

▶ Continued from P 1

Yogendra Yadav and Suhass Palshikar said they did not want NCERT to use their names to endorse “politically biased, academically indefensible and pedagogically dysfunctional” political science textbooks. Last year, the former chief advisers for the political science textbooks had criticised the rationalisation exercise for “mutilating” the books beyond recognition and demanded the removal of their names. They said textbooks, once a source of pride, had become a source of embarrassment. Despite their objections, the revised textbooks still list them as chief advisers.

Expressing shock that “more than a year after our original request, NCERT has gone ahead to publish... without removing our names”, Yadav and Palshikar said in their letter, “We are also distressed to learn that NCERT has taken a step further in its drive towards indiscriminate distortion of these textbooks. NCERT has resorted to significant additions and rewriting that are out of sync with the spirit of the original textbooks. Both of us, as

NCERT: Will use ‘Bharat’ & ‘India’ in textbooks

“Bharat” and “India” will be used interchangeably in NCERT textbooks, aligning with the terminology in the country’s Constitution, according to Dinesh Prasad Saklani, director of NCERT. Saklani’s comments are significant following a recommendation from a high-level panel on the social science curriculum to replace “India” with “Bharat” in all school textbooks.

“It is interchangeable... our position is what our Constitution says and we uphold that. We can use Bharat, we can use India, what is the problem? We are not in that debate. Wherever it suits we will use India, wherever it suits we will use Bharat. We have no aversion to either India or Bharat,” he said in a discussion with PTL. TNN

chief advisers of the original textbooks, have already registered our strong disapproval of this unethical mutilation of textbooks that violate both the authors’ rights to intellectual property and the students’ right to quality education.”

Passenger flying B’luru-SF on AI finds ‘metal blade’ in meal



The flyer, despite putting the blade in his mouth, was unharmed

New Delhi: A person flying Bengaluru-San Francisco on June 9 reportedly found a metal blade in his meal, which he was able to spit out in time before it could cause any harm.

“Air India food can cut like a knife. Hiding in its roasted sweet potato and fig chaat was a metal piece that looked like a blade. I got a feel of it only after chewing the grub for a few seconds. Thankfully, no harm was done. Of course, blame squarely lies with Air India’s catering service but the incident doesn’t help the image I have of Air India. What if the metal piece was in food served to a child?” Mathures Paul said on X.

AI chief customer experience officer Rajesh Dogra said: “AI confirms a foreign object was found in the meal of a guest aboard one of our flights... It has been identified as coming from the vegetable processing machine used at the facilities of our catering partner.” TNN

Homeopath pays ₹16L for MBBS seat, gets ‘degree’ in a month

Ashish.Chauhan@timesgroup.com

Ahmedabad: A homeopath from Gujarat’s Mehsana paid Rs 16.3 lakh for admission to an MBBS course from a UP university and received his degree and certificates within a month of making full payment, without attending a single class or taking any exam. Realising it was a forged degree, he approached police in 2019. However, the FIR was registered only on June 14, after almost five years.

In July 2018, Suresh Patel (41) came across a website offering an MBBS degree through a forum called All India Alternative Medical Council, and phoned the contact person, Dr Prem Kumar Rajput. “Rajput assured me I

would get an MBBS degree based on my class 12 marks. I was sceptical... but he assured me everything would be legal,” Patel told TOI.

Rajput told Patel he would undergo internships, take exams and get the degree in five years. Patel decided to go ahead and paid Rs 50,000, after which he got an admission

DOCTORED PAPERS

letter from Bundelkhand University in Jhansi.

“Rajput spoke to me about 25 times. He told me three others — Dr Sauket Khan, Dr Anand Kumar and Arun Kumar — would help me complete the course. On his instructions, I paid Rs 16.3 lakh between July 10, 2018, and Feb 23, 2019, and waited for my

classes to start,” said Patel.

“In March 2019, I received a package via courier with MBBS marksheets, a degree certificate, internship training certificates and a registration certificate in my name, all bearing the stamp of Medical Council of India,” he said. Patel approached MCI and learned he had been taken for a royal ride. He filed a complaint with police, which was later handed over to Ahmedabad crime branch in 2019, but yielded no results.

Meanwhile, Patel collected more evidence and in Dec 2023, filed a complaint with Mehsana SP’s office. The application was transferred to Nandasan police, which filed an FIR for breach of trust, cheating and abetment under IPC against four persons.

‘Depressed’ IIT-K student found dead

Kolkata/Kharagpur: A 21-year-old female biotechnology student from Kerala was found dead on Monday at IIT-Kharagpur (IIT-K), the third death on the campus since 2022, report Dipawali Mitra & Sujoy Khanra.

The third-year student was undergoing treatment for depression and mental health issues, campus sources said even as some students and professors described her as bright.

An IIT-K release said it was devastated. “Cops are conducting a thorough investigation into the circumstances of Devika’s death and the institute is cooperating,” it added.

A senior police officer said, “We have seized a diary, a laptop, a mobile, a rope, some medicines and other articles.”

DIRECTORATE GENERAL RESETTLEMENT

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

Job Fair : Hindon (Ghaziabad)

21 June 2024 - 07:00 AM onwards
(Registration till 10:00 AM)
Venue : Station Auditorium, Air Force Station,
Hindon (Ghaziabad) UP

Documents Required :
ESM I card and five copies of latest CV/Bio Data with photograph

BENEFITS FOR ESM JOB SEEKERS

Interact with Recruiters from Top PSUs/Corporates (Employers)
Hassle Free Recruitment Process
No cost access to Multiple Job Opportunities

BENEFITS FOR EMPLOYERS

Free access to Veterans talent pool
Register online & book your company's stall at www.dgrindia.gov.in
Allotment on first-come-first-serve basis

For further queries & assistance, please contact:

Joint Director (SE & CI)
Directorate General Resettlement
West Block IV, RK Puram, New Delhi-110066
Tel: 011-20862542
E-mail: seopadgr@desw.gov.in
Web: <http://www.dgrindia.gov.in>

DRZ(C), Lucknow
Tel: 0522-2482833
E-mail: drzclkw@desw.gov.in
Contact: Hindon (Ghaziabad) UP
Warrant Officer SK Singh : 9311720898
Jr Warrant Officer UC Mohanta : 7030595754

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THE TIMES OF INDIA

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NBT
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UBT MLC booked for entering counting centre sans permission

Nitasha Natu & Clara Lewis | TNN

Mumbai: Sena (UBT) MLC Vilas Potnis and his armed police guard were booked late on Sunday for having entered the Lok Sabha election counting centre for the Mumbai North-West seat at Nesco ground in Goregaon East without authorisation on June 4.

The FIR came days after Mangesh Pandlikar, a relative of newly elected Mahayuti MP from Mumbai North-West Ravindra Waikar and representative of independent candidate Lata Shinde, was booked for unauthorised use of a cellphone at the counting centre. The cellphone use had sparked allegations that it was used to generate one-time passwords (OTP) to access the EVMs there. The returning officer and police rebutted this charge, clarifying that EVMs do not require OTPs.

The FIR against Potnis was lodged by Vanrai police after a representative of Waikar, Prajakta Mahale, dashed off a complaint to the returning officer on June 13. In her letter, she said Potnis, along with an armed guard, was spotted at the counting cen-

Will go to court over poll malpractice at Mumbai N-W counting centre: Aaditya

Joining the row over alleged unauthorised EVM access, MLA **Aaditya Thackeray** said on Monday that the official machinery was misused to snatch victory from Shiv Sena (UBT) in the Mumbai North-West LS constituency. He said the party will file a petition in court against the alleged electoral malpractice.

Terming the result a "fraud"—Sena's Ravindra Waikar Thackeray won over Sena (UBT)'s Amol Kirtikar by just 48 votes—said there is an ongoing debate on the election process and EVMs. "If we look at the election result, it shows Election Commission of India is not the poll panel, but an 'Entirely Compromised Commission'. They are working at the behest of a particular party," he said. Thackeray said that the party will release the technical details during the court battle, showing how govt machinery was misused. TNN

tre between 4pm and 8pm alongside Sena (UBT) candidate Amol Kirtikar.

"I raised an objection to Potnis's presence at the counting centre with his armed guard and you (the returning officer) then directed officials to move them out. Kirtikar is well aware that a person without an authorised pass from the returning officer entering the counting centre is a violation of Election Commission's rules," said the letter. It said the incident was captured on CCTV

'Denied water & food', man kept at thana as 'witness' dies

Agra: A man brought into a police station as a witness late on Sunday died on Monday morning after he was allegedly not given food or water through the night amid the intense heat-wave sweeping the region. Two cops — including the SHO — have been suspended for negligence after the deceased's family accused them of asking for money to let him return home, reports **Deepak Lavania**.

A resident of Dalsahpur village in UP's Etah district, Rakesh Singh, 52, was taken to the Nidholi police station 10km from his village after his brother Devendra scuffled over a monetary transaction with Husain Mohammad. The cops detained Husain and Devendra, and Rakesh, who was present at the scene, was also taken to the station, though there were no charges against him.

Devendrasaid, "It was very hot, and we kept requesting the police to provide us with some water, but the SHO shouted at us. Rakesh had nothing to do with the matter, and I asked the cops to let him go home, but they did not pay any heed."

Small airports to be 1st to rely on GAGAN satnav for landings

Manju.V@timesgroup.com

Mumbai: Aircraft ordered by IndiGo and Air India last year — a total of 970 Boeing and Airbus planes — will come fitted with receivers that can capture 'augmented satellite signals' and thus carry out an approach and landing without any help from ground-based navigation aids. In the initial stages, though, such futuristic landings would be limited to smaller airports of India, say experts. Pilots landing in larger airports such as Delhi and Mumbai might use these only as a backup when the ground-based high precision instrument landing system (ILS) falters.

Beating the ILS installed at big airports is not easy. It offers a high-precision descent angle guidance that also directs aircraft to the runway centreline. Many small airports don't have ILS though. Here, the pilots use a rudimentary

TIMES Special

ground-based navigation aid or alternatively, a system of approach and landing that employs satellite signals, the very same signals that help motorists. These signals sent by the global navigation satellite system (GNSS) such as the US's GPS, for instance, are not accurate or reliable enough for use in, say, low visibility conditions such as winter fog. That is where the augmented satellite signal, the touted game-changer, comes in.

Augmentation makes GPS signals reliable enough for aircraft navigation. Augmentation is done by SBAS or satellite-based augmentation system of geosynchronous satellites that move with the Earth to stay above a certain region, that is.

India's SBAS, called GAGAN, stands for GPS Aided Geo Augmented Navigation. GAGAN's job is to take the basic GPS signals and augment them to improve its competency in helping aircraft navigate. While ISRO launched the first GAGAN satellite about 13 years ago, it has been largely jobless all these years. Why? Most aircraft in Indian carriers' fleet were not installed with the equipment that could receive GAGAN signals. Till now, airlines installed these GAGAN-enabled receivers only on some turboprop aircraft such as ATRs or Bombardiers. Jets largely had GPS-receivers. That has changed now.

An Air India spokesperson said: "All Boeing and Airbus aircraft ordered by Air India will be compliant with GAGAN."

IndiGo, in a statement, said: "We will start taking deliv-

COUNTRY'S PROXIMITY TO EQUATOR AN ISSUE



WHAT IS GAGAN

> It stands for 'GPS Aided Geo Augmented Navigation'



> **What is its purpose:** It is meant to augment basic GPS signals, improving their accuracy and integrity to make them reliable for civil aviation use

2011 First GAGAN satellite launched

> Jointly developed by Airports Authority of India and Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)

₹774Cr Estimated cost

AN ISSUE

GAGAN signals degrade around 2pm when equatorial ionospheric activity peaks

> A solution

Dual-frequency multi-constellation; it is not affected by ionospheric activity

WHAT IS ILS

> For now, larger airports such as Mumbai, Delhi will rely on the Instrument Landing System (ILS) for landings

> An ILS offers high precision vertical and lateral guidance to help pilots carry out a safe descent and touchdown on runway centreline

> In basic ILS Category-1, the 'decision altitude' is about 200ft; it's the altitude at or before which pilots should decide whether to continue with a landing or abort

> Lower the decision height, higher the probability of landing on a runway during low visibility conditions, and lower the possibility of flight diversion

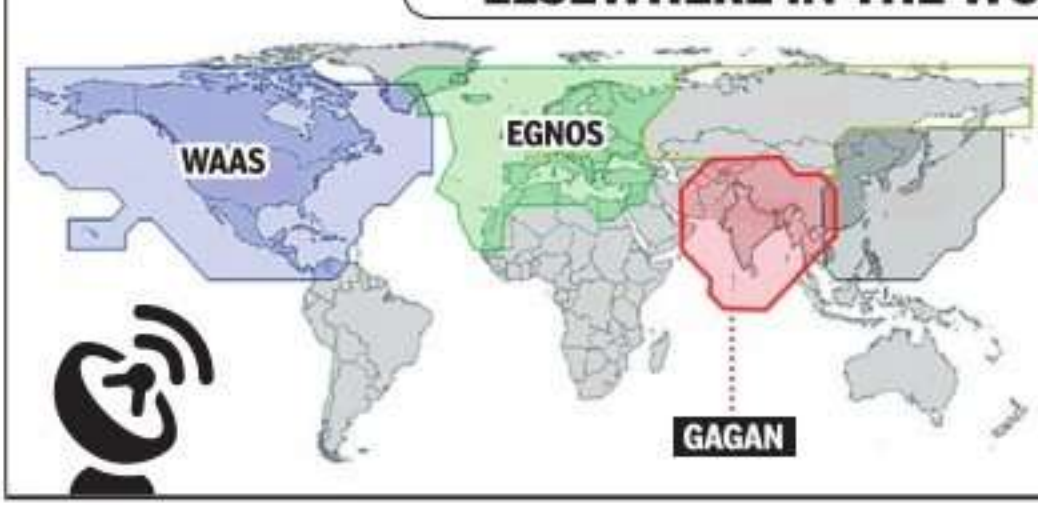
> ILS Category-3B has a decision altitude of 50m or less, the lowest currently available

> The GAGAN-enabled LPV approach has a decision height which is generally as low as ILS Category-1

April 2022 | An IndiGo ATR did a trial LPV landing at Kishanganj airport. The decision height was 250ft, said DGCA

> In future, LPV can be used as a backup in metro airports when ILS signals fail

ELSEWHERE IN THE WORLD



> Like India's GAGAN, US has WAAS and Europe EGNOS

> Unlike GAGAN which is affected by equatorial ionospheric activity, WAAS and EGNOS are not. So, "their augmented signals meet four conditions of accuracy, integrity, availability and continuity for reliable use

eries of the 500 aircraft ordered in 2023 by 2030. With LPV being the preference across Europe/ US, we expect all aircraft will be delivered with LPV capability."

LPV stands for localiser performance with vertical guidance. It is a category of descent and landing procedure that entirely relies on augmented satellite signals such as GAGAN. No ground-based nav aids are required. In India, it can be carried out only by aircraft equipped with GAGAN receivers such as the 970 aircraft ordered by IndiGo and Air India. But there is another crucial condition.

LPV approaches can be carried out only if GAGAN signals meet the four conditions of accuracy, integrity, availability and continuity. That is where India's geographic location poses a problem as it li-

es close to the equator:

"It is known that equatorial regions pose severe ionospheric challenges that hinder the exploitation of full benefits of GNSS-based flight procedures," said Narayan Dhillal, satellite navigation (GNSS) engineer and air navigation expert at Galileo Control Centre, Germany. A majority of Indian airspace falls under the core equatorial region, so GAGAN's performance doesn't meet the four conditions at certain times of the day. "The GAGAN system has to conservatively inflate the ionospheric error protection bound due to a daily phenomenon of larger ion content which peaks around 2pm local time, and of course during high solar activities," Dhillal said. There are solutions though.

"I still see gradual increment in the uptake of GAGAN

for flight procedures in the future. This will be largely driven by the dual-frequency multi-constellation (DFMC) GAGAN approach. In such an approach, the above-mentioned critical challenge of the ionosphere is largely eliminated and hence, the confidence in vertical guidance is improved..." Dhillal said. The issue of ionospheric scintillation will remain, he said. "I see a good prospect for GAGAN-based approaches in metro airports after the DFMC system comes into play," he added.

Making most aircraft GAGAN-compliant is not difficult. "A multi-mode receiver chip costing \$20,000 is installed. It's an easy installation and can be done after aircraft delivery as well," said an official with an original equipment manufacturer. Airbus and Boeing refused to comment.

T.T.DEVASTHANAMS, TIRUPATI MARKETING DEPARTMENT
e-Procurement Tender Notice
e-Tenders were invited for supply of "1,80,000 Kgs of Dried Grapes (Indian Brown) (four months period) through e-tenders-cum-reverse tendering-e-tenders" to the Marketing Department, T.T.Devasthanams. For Tender notice and tender details log on to the website <http://www.tirumala.org> and <https://tender.aeprocurement.gov.in>. For further details contact phone numbers: 0877-2264079, 2264555, FAX No: 0877-2264554. TTD-40021(31/11/2024+PRO SEC (Adv. No. 33), Date: 17.06.2025 Sd/- Executive Officer

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF ACCUSED PERSON
See Section 82 Cr. P. C.
Whereas a complaint has been made before me that accused person namely **1.Farid @ Rehan s/o Mainuddin 2. Ikramuddin s/o Salim R/o Vill.Aad, P.S Mundali,Distt-Meerut U.P.** have committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence under **FIR No. 32291/19 u/s 379/411/34 IPC**, has been registered at **P.S. Keshav Puram Delhi** and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest thereupon issued that the said, **1.Farid @ Rehan 2.Ikramuddin** cannot be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said, **1.Farid @ Rehan 2.Ikramuddin** has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant). Proclamation is hereby made that the said accused, **1.Farid @ Rehan 2.Ikramuddin** of under **FIR No. 32291/19 u/s 379/411/34 IPC**, registered at **PS. Keshav Puram Delhi** is required to appear before this court to answer the said complaint on or before **25.07.2024**
By Order
Ms. Divya Arora MM-04, Room No.112, first floor, Rohini Courts Delhi
DP/7232/NW/2024-Court matter

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF ACCUSED PERSON
See Section 82 Cr. P.C.
Whereas complaint has been made before me that accused person(s) **Yasir Akhtar S/o Farid Akhtar R/o: H.No. M-241, Sunder Nagri, Nand Nagri, Delhi** has committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence in case **FIR No. 188/2021, U/s 279/338 IPC, P.S.: Kotwali, Delhi** and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest thereupon issued that the said accused person(s) **Yasir Akhtar**, cannot be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said accused person(s) **Yasir Akhtar**, has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant). Proclamation is hereby made that the said accused person(s) **Yasir Akhtar**, of **FIR No. 188/2021, U/s 279/338 IPC, P.S.: Kotwali, Delhi** is required to appear before this Court to answer the said complaint on or before **18.07.2024**.
By Order
Ms. Sayesha Chadha LD, Metropolitan Magistrate-08, Room No. 272, Tis Hazari Court, New Delhi
DP/7370/IN/2024 (Court Matter)

SEARCH FOR MISSING
General public is hereby informed that a Girl Namely **Chhaya D/o Raj Kumar R/o B-88, Mauji Wala Bagh, Lal Bagh Azadpur Delhi** has been missing since **09/06/2024 from the area her house in this regard FIR/DD No.0362/2024 Dated 09/06/2024 has been registered at P.S. Adarsh Nagar, Delhi**. Sincere efforts have been made by the local police to trace out the missing Female, but no clue has come to light so far. The description of the missing Girl is as under: **Name:** Chhaya, **Gender:** Girl, **Age:** 13 years, **Height:** 4'11", **Complexion:** Wheatish, **Built:** Thin, **Face:** Round, **Wearing:** light green colour Suit and slippers in the feet. **Identification:** 4 tattoo on right hand and 3 heart tattoos on right elbow. If anyone has any information regarding this missing Girl, kindly inform SHO/Adarsh Nagar, Delhi.
E-mail : cic@cbi.gov.in **SHO**
Ph.: 011-24368638, 24368641
Fax : 011-24368639
DP/7416/NW/2024
PS Adarsh Nagar, Delhi. Tel.No.8750870229

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF ACCUSED PERSON
(Section 82 Cr. P.C.)
Whereas a complaint has been made before me that the accused person **Kavita W/o Sandeep R/o Flat no. 210, pocket 20, Sector-20 Rohini, Delhi** has committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence in case **FIR No. 89/2023, u/s 125 Electricity Act at PS Kanjhawala, Delhi** and it has been returned to warrant of arrest there upon issued that the said accused person **Kavita**, cannot be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said accused **Kavita**, has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of said warrant).Proclamation is hereby made that the said person **Kavita** accused **FIR No. 89/2023, u/s 125 Electricity Act at PS Kanjhawala, Delhi** is required to appear before this court to answer the said complaint on or before **18.07.2024**.
By order
Sh. Jitendra Singh, Additional Sessions Judge (Electricity) Room No.205, Rohini Courts, Delhi
DP/7272/RD/2024

2 melanistic tiger cubs seen in Similipal
Two melanistic (black stripes) tiger cubs were spotted moving with their mother (T-24), also melanistic, in Similipal Tiger Reserve in Odisha, reports **Riyan Ramanath**. "...After a few decades, report of tiger breeding recorded in northern Similipal. T-24 rearing two melanistic cubs has brought hope & happiness among team Similipal. Salutations to their efforts," Susanta Nanda, principal chief conservator of forests, wrote on X.

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF ACCUSED PERSON
See Section 82 Cr.P.C.
Whereas complaint has been made before me that accused **Inder S/o: Rajesh, R/o: B-232, J.J. Colony, Raghbir Nagar, Delhi**, has committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence in case **FIR No. 550/2020 U/s 356/379/34 IPC, P.S.: Rajouri Garden, Delhi** and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest thereupon issued that the said accused **Inder** cannot be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said accused **Inder**, has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant). Proclamation is hereby made that the said **Inder** accused of **FIR No. 550/2020 U/s 356/379/34 IPC, P.S.: Rajouri Garden, Delhi** is required to appear before this Court to answer the said complaint on or before **06.08.2024**.
By Order
Sh. Shashank Nandan Bhatt, LD. MM - 02, Tis Hazari Court, West Delhi
DP/7510/WD/2024 (Court Matter)

Appeal for Identification
General Public is hereby informed that a male dead body **Name:** Unknown, **S/o** Unknown, **R/o:** Unknown, **Age:** About 27 years, **Height:** 5'3", **Complexion:** Shallow, **Wearing:** Blue Color T-Shirt having Panchvati Logo, white Color Jeans was found dead Near Khajuri Flyover Khajuri Chowk, Delhi. In this regard, **DD No. 113-A dated 14.06.2024** has been lodged at PS New Usmanpur, Delhi. Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out information about this male but no clue has come to light so far. Any, person having any information or clue about this male may kindly inform to the following. **SHO P.S., New Usman Pur, Delhi Ph. : 011-22172410, 8750870726, 9868669811**
DP/7538/NE/2024

UNIDENTIFIED DEAD BODY
General Public is hereby informed that a male person namely **Unknown, S/o Unknown, R/o Unknown** was found at the entry gate of Subway Vinobhapuri Metro Station, near Srinivas Puri Red Light, Lajpat Nagar, New Delhi. In this regard vide **DD No: 42A Dated, 27/5/2024** has been lodged at **P.S, Lajpat Nagar, New Delhi**.
The description of the deceased is given as below:
Name: Unknown, **Age:** 48 years, **Identification mark:** Mole on left side cheek, abrasion on left eyebrow, forehead, right arm and left forearm, **Wearing:** Grey color pants and yellow color shirt.
Sincere efforts have been made by local police to identify the deceased but no clue has come to light so far. Anyone having information about the deceased, please inform the undersigned.
SHO P.S Lajpat Nagar, New Delhi M. No: 9868853391, 8750870927
DP/7437/SE/2024

APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION
General public is hereby informed that a unidentified dead body of a male namely **Unknown, S/o: Unknown, R/o: Unknown found dead on 31.05.2024 at Anand Vihar Terminal, RPF Post, Delhi**. In this regard **DD No. 30A, dated 31/05/2024** has been lodged at Police Station Anand Vihar Railway Station, Delhi. Identification of unidentified dead body of male is as under:
Name: Unknown, **Age:** About 30-35 Years, **Height:** 5'6", **Complexion:** Wheatish, **Face:** Round, **Built:** Medium, **ID Mark:** Sukhlal Tattoo on Right Hand, **Wearing:** Green Shirt, Red Banian, Blue Pajama, **Watch in hand and Black Sleeper in feet**.
If anyone have any information or clue about this male deceased may kindly be inform undersigned.
SHO P. S. Anand Vihar Railway Station, Delhi Ph.: 8750871314, 8586871706
DP/6772/Rly/2024

Mumbai girl hurt in 60ft fall from Raigad fort: A 16-year-old girl from Andheri, Riya Sable, sustained severe injuries on her head, knees and hands after slipping and falling from Peb fort, adjoining Matheran hills in Karjat taluka, Raigad, on Sunday, reports Umesh K Parida.

CENTRE FOR RAILWAY INFORMATION SYSTEMS
Chankayapuri, New Delhi-110021
Tender No. 01245185
Subject: Mobile Application Security Solutions
Date of Closing: 09.07.2024 (Tuesday) at 15:30 hrs.
Tender Documents can be downloaded from Website www.ireps.gov.in. For future modification / extensions pl. see www.ireps.gov.in.

Centre for Railway Information Systems
Chankayapuri, New Delhi-110021
Tender No. : 01245184
Subject: CMM application Development including customization and maintenance for 2 years
Date of Closing: 10.07.2024 (Wednesday) at 15:30 hrs.
Tender Documents can be downloaded from Website www.ireps.gov.in. For future modification / extensions please see www.ireps.gov.in.

CENTRE FOR RAILWAY INFORMATION SYSTEMS
Chankayapuri, New Delhi-110021
Tender No. 01245186
Subject: Supply, Installation, Testing & Commissioning of Multi-location CRIS cloud Infrastructure in Chankayapuri and Secunderabad Data Center.
Date of Closing: 09.07.2024 (Tuesday) at 15:30 hrs. **Pre-bid Meeting on:** 25.06.2024 (Tuesday) at 11.00 hrs at CRIS ITPI Building, Near ITO, New Delhi-110002.
Tender Documents can be downloaded from Website www.ireps.gov.in. For future modification / extensions pl. see www.ireps.gov.in

CHITTARANJAN LOCOMOTIVE WORKS
CORRIGENDUM
[A] No. - 75243704 Dated: 12/06/2024. Sub: Change of Tender Closing date. Tender No.75243704 for procurement of "Set of Insulating Base for WAG-9HC" re-scheduled to be opened on 24/06/2024 instead of 17/06/2024. [B] No. 75/Paper Publication/ Fab Dated : 12/06/2024. The following corrigendum has been carried out in respect of the Tender No. 75/24/4135A which is scheduled to be opened on 14/06/2024. Sl. No.: [01]. Particulars: T.O.D. Tender No.: 75/24/4135A. Opening Date From: 14/06/2024 To 21/06/2024. Quantity: 7423 Nos. PR6470 SMM/M/CLW/CRJ
Like us on : www.facebook.com/clwrrailways

Woman among 5 Maoists killed in J'khand op; 2 others held

Jamshedpur: A combined team of CRPF and Jharkhand police shot dead five Maoists, including a woman cadre, and arrested two others during an anti-Naxal operation Monday in Lipunga forest of the state's West Singhbhum district, reports **B Sridhar**.

According to police, two other Maoists managed to escape with bullet wounds, and a manhunt is currently underway to capture them.

Among the slain Maoists were Singrai aka Manoj Kunjam, a sub-zonal committee member of the banned outfit, zonal committee member Kande Honhaga aka Govind Nagdubar, carrying Rs 5-lakh reward on his head, and squad member Surya aka Munda Devgam, carrying a reward of Rs 2 lakh. The remaining two killed were identified as squad members Junga Purty aka Marla and Sapni Hansdah.

The forces arrested Sapni's husband Pandu Hansdah aka Tiger, who is an area commander and carried a Rs2-lakh bounty. Alongside him, Batari Bara, a woman cadre, was also arrested. "As the security forces approached, the armed extremists attacked with gunfire. Our forces responded with retaliatory fire, leading to the deaths of five Maoists," West Singhbhum SP Ashutosh Shekhar said.

Clarification: In the news report titled "In U-turn, Gopi says called Indira 'mother of Cong'", which was published in TOI's editions on June 17, former chief minister of Kerala K Karunakaran was inadvertently described as Tamil Nadu's ex-CM. The error is regretted.

Guv orders Kolkata police to leave Raj Bhavan, cops stay put

Debashish.Konar @timesgroup.com

Kolkata: In an unprecedented move, West Bengal governor CV Ananda Bose called on Monday for the Kolkata police team to leave the Raj Bhavan campus. Police officers, however, remained at their posts.

A Lalbazar official said no communication had been received from Raj Bhavan on the matter.

According to a Raj Bhavan official, a letter was sent to the relevant state govt authority.

At a press meet on Friday, Bose had expressed displeasure at victims of poll violence being denied entry to Raj Bhavan despite being granted requisite permission. He had sought a reply from chief minister Mamata Banerjee, alleging that Kolkata

police had tried to prevent him from carrying out his duty as governor.

On Monday morning, Raj Bhavan officials requested closure of the police outpost at the North Gate, but cops said they could not leave without a directive from Lalbazar. Additionally, Bose wanted to set up a Jana Manch near the gate but the police team refused on grounds that Raj Bhavan was in a high-security zone with prohibitory orders under CrPC Section 144 permanently imposed around it.

Sources said the governor wanted the team of over 100 Kolkata police personnel to be removed, suspecting that they were keeping tabs on him. Bose already receives Z-category security from CRPF; Kolkata police are posted only in the outer ring.

Pot of gold: Sheelavathi goes for ₹1.2L/kg, courtesy polls

Nalla.Babu@timesgroup.com

Visakhapatnam: The black market price of Sheelavathi, a strain of ganja illegally grown in the Andhra-Odisha border (AOB) region, has gone up in the recent days to nearly Rs 1.2 lakh per kg in various parts of the country.

Drug smugglers took huge risks moving the contraband in the past few months as security agencies had set up checkpoints at the borders of all states for the recent Lok Sabha elections. This was the main factor for the jacked up prices, sources in Andhra Pradesh police said.

Officials also say that Sheelavathi recently overtook the Malana Cream variety of Himachal Pradesh in popularity in the illegal market and has found many takers in the north. The cannabis, routed through AOB by organised drug syndicates, is in great demand in other states and metro cities. While drug peddlers procure it from cultivators at anywhere between Rs 3,000 and Rs 5,000 per kg, the prices go up several times by the time the cannabis reaches its handlers in cities like Vizag, Hyderabad, Delhi, Mumbai, Goa, Bengaluru, Chennai, Kolkata, and other parts of the country.



DANIEL RADCLIFFE, ANGELINA JOLIE PICK THEIR FIRST TONY AWARDS; WIN BEST ACTOR & PRIZE FOR PRODUCING BEST MUSICAL, RESPECTIVELY



ARMIE HAMMER FELT SUICIDAL AFTER CANNIBALISM & SEX ASSAULT CLAIMS, BUT IS NOW GRATEFUL FOR EVERY BIT OF IT: 'KILLED MY EGO'

Nato chief says nations in talks to put N-weapons on standby

Russia Claims Escalation, Stoltenberg Says Just 'Modernisation'

London: Nato is in talks to deploy more nuclear weapons, taking them out of storage and placing them on standby, in the face of a growing threat from Russia and China, the head of the alliance said on Monday.

Jens Stoltenberg told Britain's Telegraph newspaper that there were live consultations between members to use transparency around its nuclear arsenal as a deterrent. "I won't go into operational details about how many nuclear warheads should be operational and which should be stored, but we need to consult on these issues. That's exactly what we're doing," he told the paper. "Transparency helps to communicate the direct message that we, of course, are a nuclear alliance."

"Nato's aim is, of course, a world without nuclear weapons, but as long as nuclear weapons exist, we will remain a nuclear alliance, because a world where Russia, China and North Korea have nuclear weapons, and Nato does not, is a more dangerous world," Stoltenberg said last week that nuclear weapons were Nato's "ultimate security guarantee" and a means to preserve peace.

The Kremlin said Stoltenberg's remark was an "escalation of tension". Spokesman Dmitry Peskov said the comments appeared to contradict a communique issued at a weekend conference in Switzerland that said any threat or use of nuclear weapons in the Ukraine context was inadmissible.

Stoltenberg later said Russia was trying to create confusion and that his comments re-



Nato boss Jens Stoltenberg said his comments referred to modernisation of Nato's nuclear deterrent, including the replacement of F-16 jets with F-35s and the modernisation of weapons deployed in Europe

Putin to visit Hanoi; US rebukes Vietnam

Russian Prez Vladimir Putin will visit Hanoi this week, multiple officials said, highlighting Communist-ruled Vietnam's loyalty to Russia and triggering a US rebuke. The visit follows Hanoi avoiding a Ukraine peace summit in Switzerland last weekend, while sending its deputy foreign minister to a Brics meeting in Russia earlier last week. Putin is expected to meet Vietnam's new prez, To Lam, during the two-day visit to Hanoi on Wednesday and Thursday, officials said. The US, which upgraded relations with Hanoi last year and is Vietnam's top trading partner, reacted harshly. "No country should give Putin a platform to promote his war of aggression and otherwise allow him to normalise his atrocities," the US embassy in Hanoi said. Vietnam's foreign ministry did not comment. REUTERS

ferred to the modernisation of Nato's nuclear deterrent, including the replacement of F-16 jets with F-35s and the modernisation of weapons deployed in Europe, which he said has been known for a long time. "Russia is trying a way to always also create a situation where they can blame Nato, and the reality is that Nato is transparent," Stoltenberg told reporters on a visit to Washington. A Nato spokesperson had earlier sought to clarify Stoltenberg's remarks, saying: "We have an ongoing modernisation pro-

gramme to replace legacy weapons and aircraft. Beyond that, there are no significant changes to our nuclear deterrent."

Russia, which sent troops into Ukraine in 2022, says the US and its European allies are pushing the world to the brink of nuclear confrontation by giving Ukraine billions of dollars worth of weapons. Prez Putin has said Russia is technically ready for nuclear war, and that Moscow could use nuclear weapons to defend itself in extreme circumstances.

Russia and the US are by

Putin to visit N Korea for first time in 24 years

Russian Prez Putin will visit North Korea on Tuesday and Wednesday for the first time in 24 years, underscoring Moscow's burgeoning partnership with the nuclear-armed state since the invasion of Ukraine. Kim Jong-un extended an invitation to Putin during a visit to Russia last Sept. Putin last visited Pyongyang in 2000. Russia and North Korea may sign a partnership deal that would include security issues, Putin's foreign policy adviser said, adding that it would not be directed against any other country.

Washington says North Korea has supplied weapons to Russia to help it fight in Ukraine. This week's trip highlights North Korea's growing strategic importance for Putin, especially its ability to supply badly needed conventional weapons for Ukraine war. REUTERS

far the world's biggest nuclear powers, holding about 88% of the world's nuclear weapons. The US reportedly has about 100 non-strategic B61 nuclear weapons deployed in Italy, Germany, Turkey, Belgium and the Netherlands. The US has another 100 such weapons within its borders. Russia is said to have about 1,558 non-strategic nuclear warheads.

Separately, Stoltenberg said over 20 Nato members will meet the target of spending at least 2% of GDP on defence this year, a record. REUTERS & AP

Putin extends defence ministry purge, hands job to a relative

Moscow: Russian Prez Putin sacked four deputy defence ministers on Monday and appointed a relative to fill one of the resulting vacancies. The reshuffle marked the latest stage in a radical shake-out which Putin launched in May when he unexpectedly removed his longstanding defence minister Sergei Shoigu. More than two years into the war in Ukraine, Putin has used the changes to signal that he wants to clear out wastage and corruption in the ministry and harness Russia's war economy more effectively to serve the needs of soldiers at the front.

He appointed Anna Tsvileva, the daughter of his late cousin, as a deputy defence minister whose responsibilities will include improving social and housing support for military personnel. Her husband Sergei Tsvilev is Russia's energy minister. Putin had previously appointed Tsvileva as head of a state fund to support participants of Russia's war effort.

Leonid Gornin, previously first deputy finance minister, will now serve as first deputy defence minister under defence minister Andrei Belousov, an economist with no military experience who was named last month to replace Shoigu. Gornin's main tasks are "to ensure efficient spending of budget funds". Also named as deputy defence ministers were Oleg Savelyev and Pavel Fradkov, the son of ex-PM Mikhail Fradkov.

Another ex-deputy defence minister was arrested on April 23 and accused of bribe-taking. Since then, four other top officials and general staff have been held on same charges in Russia's biggest graft scandal in years. REUTERS

US surgeon gen calls for warning labels on social media platforms

Similar Intervention In 1965 Led To Label On Cigs, Initiating Decline In Smoking

The US surgeon general, Vivek Murthy, announced Monday that he would push for a warning label on social media platforms advising parents that using



the platforms might damage adolescents' mental health. Warning labels — like those that appear on tobacco and alcohol products — are one of the most powerful tools available to the nation's top health official, but Dr. Murthy cannot unilaterally require them; the action requires approval by Congress. No such legislation has yet been introduced in either chamber.

In his essay, he cast the effects of social media on children and teenagers as a public health risk on par with road fa-



BALL IS IN CONGRESS' COURT: Warning labels — like those that appear on tobacco and alcohol products — are one of the most powerful tools available to the nation's top health official, but Dr Vivek Murthy cannot unilaterally mandate them; the action requires approval by Congress. No such legislation has yet been introduced in either chamber

talities or contaminated food. "Why is it that we have failed to respond to the harms of social media when they are no less urgent or widespread than those posed by unsafe cars, planes or food?" he wrote. "These harms are not a failure of willpower and parenting; they are consequence of unleashing powerful technology without adequate safety measures, transparency or accountability." Murthy pointed to research that showed that teens who spent more than three hours a day on social media faced a significantly higher risk of mental health problems, and that 46% of adolescents said social media made them feel worse about their bodies.

US teens are spending an average of 4.8 hours per day on platforms like YouTube, TikTok and Instagram, according to a Gallup survey of over 1,500 adolescents released last fall.

Past warning labels have had significant effects on behaviour. In 1965, after a landmark report from the surgeon general, Congress voted to require all cigarette packages distributed in the US to carry a warning that using the product "may be hazardous to your health." That was the beginning of a 50-year decline in smoking. When the warning labels appeared, around 42% of US adults were daily cigarette smokers; by 2021, that portion had dropped to 11.5%. nvt

PIO woman killed, another injured after being shot at in US

New York: An Indian-origin woman was killed and another critically injured after they were shot in the US state of New Jersey, allegedly by a 19-year-old Indian-origin man, according to authorities.

The shooting occurred on June 12 in northeastern Middlesex County, the county prosecutor said in a press release. Responding to a shooting report, officers located two female victims who had sustained gunshot wounds and airlifted them to the hospital. Jasvir Kaur, 29, of Carteret, was pronounced dead at the hospital, while the other victim, a 20-year-old woman, was critical, it said. The other victim was Kaur's cousin, according to CBS News.

Police arrested Gaurav Gill, 19, later in the day in connection with the shooting. He was on the run for hours and

was cornered by law enforcement in a backyard about a half mile from where the shooting happened, the report said. Gill, a resident of Kent, was charged with "one count of first-degree murder; two counts of second-degree possession of a weapon for an unlawful purpose, one count of second-degree unlawful possession of a weapon, one count of fourth-degree possession of a high-capacity magazine and one count of first-degree attempted murder," the press release said.

The motive for the shooting was not immediately known and it was unclear how or if the suspect knew the victims, it said. Police have said that the investigation is "active and continuing" and have urged people with information to call and reach out to authorities. PTI

Russia to begin closed-door spy trial of jailed US journo on June 26

Moscow: A court in Russia said on Monday that the espionage trial of the imprisoned American journalist Evan Gershkovich would start next week and that the proceedings would be held behind closed doors.

The first hearing, set for June 26, will come almost 15 months after Gershkovich, 32, was detained by security agents in the Russian city of Yekaterinburg. The Wall Street Journal journalist has spent more than a year in a high-security prison in Moscow and is likely to be transferred back to stand trial.

Gershkovich, who had worked in Russia as a journalist for various publications for more than five years before his arrest, has denied the charges. The US has designated Gershkovich as "wrongfully detained".

He is the first American journalist to be detained on spy charges in Russia since Cold War over three decades ago. nvt

Bibi dissolves war cabinet after 2 key members quit

PM Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel has dissolved his war cabinet, an Israeli official said Monday, a move that had been widely expected after the departures of two key members prompted demands from far-right politicians for representation in the influential group that made key decisions about the conflict in the Gaza Strip.

The two members, Benny Gantz and Gadi Eisenkot, quit Netanyahu's small war Cabinet last week amid disagreements over the direction of the war. The men, both former military chiefs, had been seen as voices of moderation in the fi-



The two members, Benny Gantz and Gadi Eisenkot, both former military chiefs, had been seen as voices of moderation in the 5-member body. The PM's move may also defuse calls from his far-right coalition partners who hoped to fill the places of Gantz and Eisenkot

ve-member body, which was formed in Oct after the Hamas-led assault on Israel.

The Israeli official suggested that Netanyahu's decision to disband the body — which was communicated to mini-

sters at a wider cabinet meeting Sunday — was largely symbolic given that Gantz and Eisenkot had already resigned. Since their departures, discussions about the war have been driven by Netanyahu in conjunction

with his defence minister, Yoav Gallant, and close advisers, said the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

Dissolving the war cabinet formalises that process. It may also defuse calls from Netanyahu's far-right coalition partners who might have hoped to fill the places of Gantz and Eisenkot.

According to Eisenkot, the influence of one of those far-right leaders, Itamar Ben-Gvir, the minister of national security, had long loomed over the discussions in the war cabinet. After Gantz resigned, Ben-Gvir immediately demanded to join the group, writing on the social

platform X that it was "about time to take brave decisions, achieve true deterrence, and bring true safety to the residents of the south, north, and all of Israel". Israeli news outlets reported Monday that Netanyahu's move to disband the war cabinet was a direct response to that demand. For now, big decisions about the war in Gaza will still be put to a separate and broader security cabinet. That group includes Ben-Gvir and Bezalel Smotrich, the finance minister. Both have argued strongly that Israel's military offensive in Gaza must continue until Hamas is destroyed.

Did Greece coast guard throw migrants into sea? Govt denies new report

Athens: Greece on Monday denied a new report that accused its coast guard of brutally preventing migrants from reaching Greek shores, which also alleged that the practice had resulted in dozens of deaths.

A BBC report said it had been ascertained that 43 migrants drowned — including nine who were thrown into the water — in 15 incidents off Greece's eastern Aegean Sea islands in 2020-2023. It cited interviews with eyewitnesses, following reports from media, charities and the Turkish coast guard. Greek govt spokesman Pavlos Marinakis insisted that there was no evidence to support the allegations. "Our understanding is that what is reported is not proved," he said when asked about the claims.

Migrant charities and human rights groups have repeatedly accused Greece's coast guard and police of illegally preventing arriving migrants from seeking asylum by sur-



NOWHERE TO GO

reptitiously returning them to Turkish waters. Greece has angrily denied that.

The new BBC report included a claim by a Cameroonian man that he and two other migrants were picked up by masked men, including policemen, just after landing on the island of Samos. The man claimed all three were put in a coast guard boat and thrown into the sea, and that the other two men drowned as a result. The report also quoted a Syrian man who said he was part of a group picked up at sea by the Greek coast guard off Rhodes. He said the survivors were put in life rafts and left adrift in Turkish waters, where several died. AP

11 migrants dead, 64 missing in two shipwrecks off Italy

Rome: Eleven migrants died and 64 were missing on Monday after two shipwrecks off southern Italy, according to a German charity, the Italian coast guard and UN agencies. The German aid group RESQSHIP, which operates the Nadir rescue ship, said it picked up 51 people from a sinking wooden boat, including two who were unconscious, and found 10 bodies trapped in the lower deck of the vessel. The UNHCR, the International Organization for Migration and Unicef said in a joint statement that the migrants intercepted by the German charity came from Syria, Egypt, Pakistan and Bangladesh. The second shipwreck took place about 200 km east of the Italian region of Calabria, as a boat that had set off from Turkey eight days earlier caught fire and overturned, the UN agencies said. They said 64 people were missing at sea, while 11 were rescued and taken ashore. The UN agencies said the migrants in the second shipwreck came from Iran, Syria and Iraq. REUTERS

Hindujas spent more on pet dog than they paid a help: Swiss prosecutor

The billionaire Hinduja family spent more on their pet dog than they paid one of their servants, according to a Swiss prosecutor who urged jail terms of as long as five and a half years at a trial over alleged trafficking and exploitation of Indian staff at their Lake Geneva villa. Prosecutor Yves Bertossa launched a blistering attack on the family at the Swiss city's criminal court on Monday, citing testimony from the staff and Hindujas, as well as evidence submitted during his investigation.

"They spent more for one dog than one of their servants," he said. The woman, he said, was paid at one point as little as 7 Swiss francs (\$7.84) for a working day that lasted as long as 18 hours, seven days a week. He pointed to a budget document headlined "Pets", which he said demonstrated that the family spent 8,584 Swiss francs in a year on their family dog. Staff contracts didn't spe-

cify working hours or days off, but rather that they be available as needed by their employers, Bertossa continued. Given their passports had been confiscated, they had no Swiss francs to spend as wages were paid in India and couldn't leave the house without their employer's permission, they had little to no freedom, he argued.

But lawyers for the family immediately hit back at Bertossa's claims, citing the servants' testimony that they were treated with respect and dignity. The salary can't simply be reduced to what they were paid in cash, given their board and lodgings were covered, said Yael Hayat, a lawyer for family scion Ajay Hinduja. Eighteen-hour working days is also an exaggeration, she said. During the trial, Ajay testified that he lacked a detailed knowledge of the staff's working conditions as their recruitment was handled by the Hinduja Group in India. BLOOMBERG

China: Philippine ship hit vessel; Manila denies

Beijing: China and the Philippines traded accusations over a maritime collision in the South China Sea on Monday, the latest in an increasingly testy series of confrontations over the disputed waters. China's Coast Guard said a Philippine supply ship "deliberately and dangerously" approached a Chinese ship resulting in a slight collision after it "illegally intruded" into waters near Second Thomas Shoal, a charge that Manila rejected as "misleading".

Manila declined to comment directly on the incident, but lashed out at Beijing after a Chinese coast guard statement said the Philippine transport and replenishment ship ignored China's repeated solemn warnings. "We will not dignify the deceptive and misleading claims of the China Coast Guard," said Xerxes Trinidad, chief of the Philippine armed forces' public affairs office, adding they would not talk details of resupply missions. REUTERS

AROUND THE WORLD



HEAT TAKES A TOLL ON TOURISTS IN GREECE: Tourist walk next a mist machine in Monastiraki district of Athens. An American has been found dead on the Greek island of Mathraki, the police said on Monday, the third tourist death in a week following a period of unusually hot weather. Temperatures soared above 40°C earlier this month. A Dutch tourist was found dead on the island of Samos Saturday and two hikers were found dead on Crete on June 5

NZ PM forced to fly commercial to Japan after air force plane breaks down

New Zealand's PM was forced to take a commercial flight to Japan after his air force plane broke down while



refuelling in Papua New Guinea, his office said Monday. PM Christopher Luxon switched late Sunday to a scheduled flight from Port Moresby to Tokyo via Hong Kong because of a technical issue with the New Zealand Defence Force Boeing 757 aircraft he had been flying on. A problem with a command module for a small flap on the wing meant the aircraft could not fly as high or as fast as normal, affecting its range, a defence spokesman said. In March, the New Zealand leader had to fly commercial to Australia for meetings after a problem with the landing gear grounded his defence force plane while still on the tarmac in Wellington.

Gate installed on a Mt Fuji trail to check overcrowding

A crowd-control gate was installed halfway up Japan's Mount Fuji on Monday ahead of the July 1 start of this year's climbing season, but the governor of Yamanashi, one of the two prefectures that are home to the mountain, said additional measures are needed to control overcrowding on its lower slopes. The gate was completed as part of a new set of rules that Yamanashi is introducing this year to address growing safety, environment and overcrowding problems on the mountain. The gate will be closed between 4pm and 3am to lock out those who have not booked an overnight stay at a hut along the Yoshida trail, mainly to stop "bullet climbing", or rushing to the summit without adequate rest, considered a major safety risk. A maximum of 4,000 climbers will be allowed to enter the trail per day. Yamanashi governor Kotaro Nagasaki said the number of climbers on the trail this year is likely to surpass last year's 137,236. "Overcrowding could lead to a major disaster, like people falling in a domino effect," he said.

Wild weather week for US: Extreme heat in east, storms in plains, snow in rockies

Hot and cold extremes are expected this week in the United States. Officials warned residents from coast to coast to take precautions as a heat wave moved east, while heavy rains and flooding could drench the Gulf Coast states and snow threatens parts of the Rockies and Northwest.

Extreme heat spread across Arizona, New Mexico and parts of Texas, Colorado and Kansas as severe weather swept across many parts of the US Sunday. There was unseasonable cold in the Pacific Northwest, snow headed to the northern Rocky

Mountains and heavy rainfall forecast from the northern Plains to the Upper Midwest. The National Weather Service estimated more than 63 million people were under heat advisories on Sunday, stretching from the Southwest northward up through Denver and into Chicago. Much of the Midwest and Northeast were under heat warnings or watches on Monday.

Temperatures in Phoenix, which hit 44.4°C on Saturday, eased slightly Sunday to 43.3°C. The heat has been especially dangerous in recent years in metro Phoenix, where 645 peo-




NYC TO HIT 37°C THIS WEEK: New York and the rest of the US Northeast are about to get seared by a record-breaking heat wave. Manhattan's Central Park is set to reach 37°C by Friday, US National Weather Service said

ple died from heat-related causes in 2023, which was a record. The US last year saw the most heat waves, consisting of abnormally hot weather lasting more than two days, since 1936.

While much of the country swelters, late season snow was forecast for the northern Rockies Monday and Tuesday. Parts of Montana and north-central Idaho were under a winter storm warning, with as much as 6 inches of heavy, wet snow expected in the mountains around Missoula, Montana. As much as 20 inches was predicted for higher elevations around Glacier National Park.

Meanwhile, a fresh batch of tropical moisture will bring an increasing threat of heavy rain and flash flooding to the central Gulf Coast late Sunday into Monday. Heavy rain is expected to start Monday morning, with the moisture shifting toward the Gulf Coast by Tuesday.

The intense flooding from heavy rains continued to dissipate in southern Florida, where some areas in and around Miami and Fort Lauderdale were left underwater in recent days as storms dumped up to 20 inches (50 centimeters). AP



A thought for today

My poet's heart gives me strength to face political problems, particularly those which have a bearing on my conscience

AB VAJPAYEE

The Verdict Speaks

Politics is hotting up over speaker, dy speaker posts. BJP not wrong to want the former. Oppn should get the latter

The churn over speaker's and deputy speaker's posts is throwing up more froth than cream. Politicisation of these two constitutional offices is again worth a lament. The process started some time back. Every year, it turns a shade worse. BJP is likely to retain the post. NDA ally TDP had eyed it, which probably prompted INDIA's stand that it would support Chandrababu Naidu's candidature for speaker in the event of an election.

Verdict's message | LS election's sobering verdict returned BJP to office with significantly smaller numbers. With 240 seats, it is understandable that BJP wants to bag the speaker's post, though to date it remains noncommittal. We'll know soon if BJP's choice will be a consensus candidate or if elections will be held.

Speaker's role | From allowing questions and debate to disqualifying MPs, from deciding on defections to setting the agenda, the speaker and deputy speaker are Parliament's conscience-keepers, tasked to run House business in an orderly manner. Essential attributes expected are impartiality, confidence they inspire in minority groups and Opposition, and freedom from party affiliations or bias. Given the hostile political atmosphere, such words sound outdated in the republic's 75th year.

Legal fiction | One need only look to Maharashtra in 2023 to see how a speaker unfamiliar with constitutional law, and seen as a "party man", can cause irrevocable damage to a House. But such is the post's authority that Supreme Court restricted itself on deciding on defections of Sena and NCP MLAs, lest it interfere in speaker's jurisdiction. But the speaker's delayed and dramatic decisions made everyone a loser in Maharashtra assembly.

Record vacancy | The 17th Lok Sabha from 2019-2024 was the first one ever without a deputy speaker throughout its duration – though Article 93 of the Constitution requires that LS elect a speaker and deputy speaker 'as soon as may be'. BJP allowed the vacancy, doing away with longstanding parliamentary convention of the post given to opposition parties. A CJI-led bench last Feb heard a PIL on the vacancy. Little came of it.

Be parliamentary | When the 18th LS meets for the first time later this month, govt must remember the mandate's enormous message – the vote was for coalition, collaboration. The spirit of the people's mandate and convention would be upheld were the post of deputy speaker to go to Opposition. That is how it should be.

Water's The Problem

Summer rainfall is expected to make a delayed arrival in large parts. This is bad news for depleted reservoirs

IMD's forecast of "above normal" rainfall this year had come as a relief. A good kharif season promised a let-up in food inflation and easing of monetary policy to spur growth. Bountiful rains would also mean an end to heatwaves, which have tormented millions this year.

Monsoon ebbs | Unfortunately, the southwest monsoon has lost some momentum in June. Experts say this is just a hiatus. But its late arrival in large parts of the country is going to delay the sowing of summer crop. It would also decrease the interval between kharif and rabi crops, which, among other things, leads to stubble burning in northwest India.

Of particular concern in this context is the low water levels in our reservoirs. According to Central Water Commission, total live storage in 150 reservoirs stood at just 22% of their live storage capacity last week. This was 79% of last year, which was 92% of the 10-year average. The situation was especially alarming in the south, where the figure was just 14% of total storage capacity.

Reservoirs vital for economy | Low reservoir levels will impact hydro power generation, which peaks in the season. Poor monsoons last year had taken a toll on hydro output, which touched a low last fiscal. It also raises fears of more drinking water crises, something that cities like Bengaluru and Delhi have faced this year. Further, unless reservoir levels go up, there would be less water for the rabi crop, which is critically dependent on irrigation.

If there's a silver lining, it is that the return of La Nina this year is expected to boost rainfall later in the season. While this should ramp up reservoir levels, the issue is sure to surface again in coming years. It calls for long-term solutions.

Daddy's visit

It begins on a high note, then sours, naturally

Bikram Vohra

Daddy is coming home from the Gulf after nearly 18 months. Everyone is excited and happy happy happy. Squeals of glee greet the arrival and the first three days are lashed with laughter and love as relatives and friends cascade into the house. It is gift time and fun is the operative sentiment. Then everyone starts getting back to their own lives and garlands begin to die. Mum goes off to work, kids have exhausted their quota of affection and attention and returned to their routine and their friends.

Dad is now alone and the day stretches gloriously into doing nothing. Glory element shrinks like cheap clothes after a week and loneliness kicks in. It suddenly hits him how redundant he is to everyone, like a stepney when there is no puncture. Resentment begins to bubble like percolating coffee. Here I am working my butt off in a foreign land, taking nonsense from half-a-dozen bosses so all of you can have a good life. And no one cares. So Daddy in his wisdom and nursing a wounded dove of an ego begins to assert himself. After all, he is the man of the house and the lion must roar, not purr like a pussycat.

Tells wife: I am doing the bank work from today. She says, but I have a good relationship with the manager, why rock things. He doesn't listen and makes a complete breakfast of the visit by flinging his weight around like he was airport staff flinging baggage. The work does not get done and wife must repair the damage.

At home the kids become targets. Daughter's dress sense, son's sloppy attitude, their school grades, their friends, their drop in discipline and love for wastage all twist into a rope of criticism. The gap gets wider as Daddy needs to assert his man of the house status and all he does is sour the air. What's going on here, is this the mess I am paying for, there is no respect here. Even old friends begin to shy away, he is just so prickly.

Long distance dad was so much better. Money, gifts, Zoom calls, expressions of endearment. This guy is a monster. We had made functional lives without his presence, now he just rocks up and expects us to be on parade. The crippled equations stumble on till finally it is flight day and relief mixes with regret and love limps back like a wounded soccer player. And because that's how it goes the first Zoom call is drenched in emotion because Daddy is still Daddy...and they love him so.

Why Modi Must Try & Make Peace

In his third term, he should take a proactive approach to peacemaking, like Norway & Switzerland. This will help India better manage its external environment

Ajay Bisaria

After a bruising election campaign, Modi's tryst in Italy with G7 bigwigs was not just an opportunity to hand out the new calling card of Modi 3.0. It was also an occasion to discuss global conflicts that are upending the world order. However, Modi wisely gave a miss to the Swiss-Ukrainian Peace Summit that followed soon after. Although India did send a secretary-level delegation to the summit, it did not sign the joint communiqué. Expectedly, the summit's efforts did not go too far with Russia not at the table. But it would be good for India to study these peace moves carefully.

A challenging world | India has deftly navigated a 21st century world where power dynamics have shifted from bipolarity to unipolarity to the current multipolarity of sorts, where India also

impacts of global conflicts. This would involve a proactive strategy to deal with external shocks.

Pressure points | Two major powers – China and Russia – and a middle power, Iran, are challenging the crumbling US-led global order. These geopolitical tussles also pose significant risks to India's ascent. China is asserting itself against US in Asia and beyond, while Russia is pushing back against Nato's expansion, and reasserting Cold War-era influence. Iran is challenging US interests both directly and through proxies, as it confronts Israel.

These contests manifest in various ways: in Europe, where Russia and Ukraine escalate the battle but demand peace, each on their own terms; in West Asia where the loss of civilian lives is propelling all parties to press Israel and Hamas to the negotiating table, but with little more than token acceptance of the UN-endorsed Biden peace plan for the 'day after'; and in the Indo-Pacific, with China's unending sabre-rattling against Taiwan.

'Religion, caste and reservations are issues where people don't spare those who disturb the balance'

Maharashtra Congress president **Nana Patole** steered Congress to its position as the state's single-largest party, having won 13 of the 17 LS seats it contested as part of MVA. Having defeated the BJP-Shinde Sena-Ajit Pawar NCP combine, Patole tells **Subodh Ghildiyal** that BJP failed in "money politics" and that it instigated caste groups for political gain but instead faced people's anger. Edited excerpts.

● Were you expecting the big Maharashtra vote?

Maharashtra results were good because of Rahul Gandhi. Had he not taken out the two Bharat Jodo Yatras and not liberated people from BJP's carefully crafted perception that 'Modi is god', and from fear of agencies, it would have been "400 paar" for sure. One man went out and mobilised people. Of course, allies contributed to this effort, but Rahul's effort was pioneering and decisive. Even Advani said Rahul is this era's 'nayak'. In UP too, where Akhilesh Yadav got the mandate, Rahul played a big role. I'm not praising him because he's a Congress boss, but because he shattered the illusion about Modi.

● What worked on the ground for Congress and MVA?

It's no miracle. It's a normal, popular response to the way BJP arrogantly broke political parties and didn't even spare farmers and youth. Maharashtra has a different culture, the Shahu-Phule-Ambedkar ideology that Congress espouses. Here, nobody can be scared into submission. It's different from Madhya Pradesh or any other place. So, our vote, the secular vote, consolidated.

Even where we were losing, we were just about 4% behind BJP. In contrast, BJP's OBC votes

shifted to us because of our leadership. They wanted to indulge in politics of money power but failed. We did well in Vidarbha and Marathwada. We failed in a couple of seats in north Maharashtra because of seat-sharing. I had asked for seats to be given on merit, but Shiv Sena and NCP thought differently. So, we lost there. Else, even in the north, we'd have decimated BJP. We lost there because of our own mistakes.

● Did the agitations over reservations hurt BJP in the state?

BJP's caught in a web of its own making. Religion, caste and reservations are issues where people don't spare those who disturb the balance. BJP told communities seeking quotas – Marathas, Dhangars etc – that "vote for us in the state and at Centre, and we'll put you in the categories you want". So, BJP was rightly asked why it hadn't fulfilled its promise. Who'll trust them now? Our stand is clear – carry out a caste census, remove the 50% ceiling on quotas, but BJP is against it.

● Can BJP surprise on policy or political front ahead of assembly polls?

BJP has nothing left to offer. At best, they'll announce a package. That is Modi's style – ₹50,000cr, ₹1L cr. But there's not much time left. You can't give much to farmers, and that's not their intent either. They can't bring down inflation or provide jobs in a day. They'll do some social engineering in ticket distribution, but it'll have no impact. I have all the formulas to counter that. See how I flipped them in Vidarbha, where even Gadkari barely escaped

defeat. MVA will win assembly polls with ease.

They may try to disturb MVA, but I can't predict how or what they'll do. BJP cannot digest this defeat easily. So, there must be something up their sleeve. If the three MVA parties stay united, BJP knows it'll be defeated. Let's see what ideas come to their mind. We are sure MVA will stay intact. Congress isn't worried. Maharashtra is known for Shivaji. When Aurangzeb came to rule here, they called Shivaji a "chuhra". He had no army, was the son of a sardar. But Shivaji tackled them all. The face of Maharashtra is Shahu-Phule-Ambedkar, and that is the face of Congress.

● Did defection of seniors throw you off?

A family that's peaceful is stable and strong. If there's disturbance, it's weak. The disturbing elements left the party, we're fine now. Rahul Gandhi also said, "don't try to persuade them to stay." He never spoke to any of them, and people taught them a lesson. People stood by the party. It was said Congress had no face in Maharashtra.

I wasn't born with a silver spoon in my mouth, but am connected to the people. We won Nanded, despite Ashok Chavan joining BJP. We won three seats in Marathwada, one in Mumbai. In Bhandara-Gondiya, Praful Patel led the campaign with a team of 25. I was alone. Our candidate was an ordinary doctor. He won. Did the defections hurt us?

● How will OBC-Maratha conflicts impact assembly polls?

Maratha leadership has shifted to BJP over the last decade. But look at Manoj Jarange. He was a taluk youth Congress president years ago and went on to fight a social battle. It was BJP's strategy to pit OBCs against Marathas – it lost both.

● Do state party seniors respect you as Congress chief?

Maharashtra's politicians are born with 'golden' spoons in their mouths. Some have no political ground. And they keep slipping. Tell me, did I slip or rise? It's good if I'm underestimated.

Calvin & Hobbes



I Wonder Why No One Talks Anymore

Narayani Ganesh

When we stop using our legs and arms for physical work or exercise, we're told, they could get atrophied. If our limbs could shrink due to lack of use, how about vocal cords and tongue, I wonder. Because we are talking less and less with one another. Well, we do, in a manner of sorts, over text messages, emoticons, social media and emails. But verbal articulation is on the decline, because the other means of communication have gained greater prominence.

"We have social muscles just like we have physical muscles," points out US surgeon general Vivek Murthy. "And those social muscles weaken when we don't use them." Less talking means less social interaction face-to-face; this, say medical experts, could impact brain function and lead to memory loss, for example. This is noticeable, especially

among senior citizens, who are left alone for long, with spouse gone and the children living far away and with no fulfilling activity. Loneliness takes over their lives. At the other end of the spectrum are youth, who too, feel lonely and maybe even depressed, due to their overactive engagement with e-devices that leaves them with little or no time to experience real world interactions. There is no touch-and-feel, no external stimuli.

Not conversing in person could also mean there is less opportunity for reading facial expressions, voice modulation and intonation, and these reflect the emotional and/or intellectual space from which that person is talking to you. These add value to comprehension and understanding, far more than mere texts and emoticons.

Places of worship like temples and

churches, mosques and synagogues were also where people, post prayer or rituals, would meet, greet and chat. So too, at community celebrations and functions related to weddings, births and deaths. With the worldwide decline in the number of people regularly going to places of worship, that opportunity for real-time conversations has reduced as well. Long periods of lockdowns during the recent Covid-19 pandemic isolated many of us from social interactions at places of work, schools, colleges, the marketplace, restaurants and so on. Online education, purchases, communication and work-from-home became a necessity, but it also meant more isolation and loneliness in real-time.

I recently visited my father's alma mater, Madras Christian College in Chennai. The principal, Prof Wilson,

gave us a guided tour of their new facility, the MCC-MRF Innovation Park, where research students' cubicles in classrooms were open-ended. "Oh that," explained Prof Wilson, observing my puzzled expression. "All our lives, we've told students not to talk, and to just listen to the teacher. Here, the idea is to have them talk lots to each other as they work on their computers, so that ideas are exchanged and even newer ideas germinate in a synergetic way."

For those on the spiritual path, satsangs are a good way to interact with like-minded people. Realised sages say that there is no loneliness if you are connected to the Divine, and you live a life of selfless service, staying active in the community, extending a helping hand, with enough room for self-exploration. That is, you don't have to look for companionship in a person once you make the connection with higher consciousness.

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Sacredspace

The secret of life is not enjoyment but education through experience. But, alas, we are called off the moment we begin really to learn...Everywhere, it is better to have a whirlwind over the work. That clears the atmosphere...

Swami Vivekananda



THE SPEAKING TREE

How The US Mopped Up A Third Of Global Capital Flows Since Covid

The trend marks a major shift from the pre-pandemic days when capital poured into emerging markets. China has seen its share of gross global inflows more than halve since the pandemic hit

Source: Bloomberg, Reuters



De-Dollarisation Narrative Swept Aside...

For all the angst over the dollar's dominance, a run-up in US interest rates to the highest levels in decades proved a major draw for overseas investors

...Buying Into Bidenomics Instead

The US has pulled in a fresh wave of FDI thanks to billions of dollars worth of incentives under Biden's initiatives to spur renewable energy and semiconductor production



Deal-Breakers?

- Trump pledging to reverse key elements of Bidenomics if he wins the Nov election
- The Fed signalling it will start lowering interest rates later this year

In a 1st, ARCs gain more from loan rejig than selloff in FY24

Asset Rejig Cos Turn To 'Value Addition' Route For Recovery

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Mumbai: For the first time ever, asset reconstruction companies saw the value of bad loan restructuring exceeding recovery through sale of non-performing assets in FY24. Traditionally, ARCs are seen as scrap dealers of the financial sector as they resort to salvaging value from banks' bad loans by selling them to the highest bidder. However, ARCs are now stepping into a role largely performed by lenders.

In FY24, the amount of loan assets restructured by ARCs rose to Rs 7,948 crore from Rs 5,546 crore in the previous year — a 43% growth over the previous year — accounting for 25% of total resolutions. At the same time, ARCs obtained Rs 7,469 crore from asset sales, which decreased 13% year-on-year.

"There is a perception that ARCs are more into asset sales than restructuring. This year, for a change, the

Revival Potential In Distressed Assets

FY24	Value of loans restructured	₹7,948cr
Asset sales	₹7,469cr	
> Asset rejig cos typically resort to salvaging value from banks' bad loans by selling them to the highest bidder		
> However, selling is one of four ways used by ARCs to recover from bad loans. The other three are restructuring, liquidation, and one-time settlements		
> Several cos have successfully		



restructured their distressed debts and achieved financial turnaround with the aid of ARCs, like **RattanIndia Power**, whose debt was purchased and recast by Aditya Birla ARC and later refinanced at a better rate by Kotak Bank

> Loan rejig involves extending the term, reducing the interest rate, or changing the repayment schedule — to help borrowers

amount of restructuring exceeds the recovery through asset sale," said Hari Hara Mishra, CEO, Association of Asset Reconstruction Companies.

"In terms of resolution strategy, value maximisation is attained in restructuring, and hence, the focus will be on this, wherever possible, in units which have revival potential," he said.

Loan restructuring invol-

ves modifying an existing loan's terms — such as extending the term, reducing the interest rate, or changing the repayment schedule — to help borrowers manage their repayments, requiring both financial analysis skills and industry knowledge. Restructuring is one of the four ways bad banks recover from bad loans. The other three are sale, liquidation, and one-time settle-

SBI steps up climate risk tracking after RBI nudge

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Mumbai: SBI has started watching the weather more intently from the current financial year. The country's largest lender is incorporating climate change risks into its lending framework and has set up a Climate Change Risk Management Committee to enhance governance and resilience to climate-related risks.

The climate change panel will provide strategic guidance and oversight to the bank to ensure that climate considerations are integrated into SBI's risk management framework, Dinesh Khara, chairman of SBI, said in the bank's sustainability report.

RBI has been nudging banks to ascertain the impact of climate change risks on their loan books. The central bank had earlier indicated

Climate risk, which has emerged as an important area of concern, has gathered considerable traction among regulators since last year... regulatory guidance may come into force in FY25



that the loan book could be impacted by borrowers suffering losses due to weather events and taking a hit in their businesses as companies tighten their environment goals.

In a letter to stakeholders, Khara said that the bank achieved a significant milestone by setting up a dedicated 'horizontal business unit' for ESG and climate finance this

year. The unit will enable the bank to achieve its net zero goal by 2055 and aims to facilitate a minimum of 7.5% of the bank's domestic loan portfolio being 'green' by 2030.

"Climate risk, which has emerged as an important area of concern, has gathered considerable traction among regulators since last year... A robust risk management framework for addressing climate risk is under process," said Khara. "The onset of El Nino Southern Oscillation in 2023 disrupted the spatial and temporal pattern of Indian monsoon with implications for agriculture and allied sectors. This warrants proactive identification and the mitigation of risk in the current financial year, particularly on the climate front where regulatory guidance may come into force in FY25," he added.

PSBs beat private banks in 'efficiency': SBI study

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Mumbai: Public sector banks in India are more efficient than their private sector peers, according to a study by SBI — the country's biggest state-owned lender. The study measures efficiency by assessing how well banks utilise resources to generate output at an optimal scale.

In the relative performance of individual banks over the full sample period from FY06-23, SBI leads among public sector banks with a score of nearly

Here, efficiency has been measured by assessing how banks utilise resources to generate output at an optimal scale

98%, followed by Union Bank of India at 92.5%. In the private sector, HDFC Bank tops the list with a score of nearly 98%, followed by Axis Bank at 94.4%.

PSBs have generally been more efficient than private banks except during FY19-23, likely due to mergers and rationalisation of business, branches, and employees, the study showed. Despite numerous structural changes, PSBs have operated at an efficiency level of 82.8%, compared to 81.2% for all scheduled commercial banks, 79.6% for private banks and 78.2% for foreign banks.

Paytm gets ex-IAS as ind director

Mumbai: Neeraj Arora, non-executive independent director at One97 Communications, has resigned, citing other commitments and personal reasons. The company has appointed former IAS officer Rajeev Krishnamurali Agarwal in the position, effective immediately, for a five-year term. **TNN**

Paris loses crown as Europe's biggest stock mkt to London

France's political upheaval has led Paris to lose its spot as Europe's biggest equity market to London, less than two years after winning that title from the UK. President Emmanuel Macron's shock announcement of a snap election sparked a rout that wiped off about \$258 billion from the market capitalisation of French firms last week. Shares of banks Societe Generale, BNP Paribas and Credit Agricole — all big holders of gov debt — lost more than 10% each.

French stocks are now collectively worth about \$3.1 trillion, narrowly losing out to the UK at \$3.2 trillion. The CAC 40 Index has erased all its gains for 2024 — a sharp reversal from scaling record highs a month ago. The FTSE 100 Index has hit all-time highs this year, fuelled by export-reliant stocks such as Shell and Unilever.

It has outperformed the Euro Stoxx 50 index by far in three months, with aerospace & defence giant Rolls-Royce among the top gainers. The UK now ranks as the sixth-biggest stock market. **BLOOMBERG**

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New EU rules seen to restrict exports of textiles, footwear

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New Delhi: The European Union's new ecodesign regulation, setting stringent sustainability requirements for all products in the bloc, is expected to hit Indian exporters, particularly smaller businesses, as it bans the destruction of unsold textiles and footwear, which could limit orders.

The guidelines issued a few weeks ago has mandated product durability, reusability and energy efficiency, and is in line with a series of steps, including carbon border adjustment mechanism and the deforestation regulations that have been put in place. CBAM is seen as a unilateral move that may be challenged at the WTO. The ecodesign regulations are to kick in 24 months after its publication in the official journal.

“There are certain products that must comply with minimum requirements related to energy efficiency. These are called ecodesign requirements and the aim is to reduce negative environmental impact throughout product's lifecycle.... —EUROPEAN UNION

The European Commission can introduce similar bans for other products in the future, an official statement said. “There are certain products that must comply with minimum requirements related to energy efficiency. These are called ecodesign requirements and the aim is to reduce the negative environmental impact throughout the product's lifecycle,” EU explained on its website.

“While industry is adjusting to the new ESG (environmental, social and governance) norms, these kinds of changes that come up suddenly particularly affect small players,” said Mithleshwar Thakur, secretary general at Apparel Export Promotion Council. Thakur, who heads the secretariat at the industry body, suggested that govt should take it up as part of the bilateral talks with EU.

Another industry player described it as a non-tariff barrier and said govt should flag the concern even during the free trade negotiations as these norms would negate the impact of any tariff cut that is being sought. The adoption of the regulations by the European Council has temporary exclusions for SMEs, but they are not seen to be sufficient.

“This new regulation replaces the existing ecodesign directive and broadens its scope to encompass all goods placed in the EU market, beyond just energy products. To encourage the public purchase of green products, ecodesign criteria will be applied in public procurement. It will also align with the Digital Services Act for products sold online,” the EU statement said.

The regulation applies to a wide array of products, with exceptions, like cars and defence-related items. It introduces new requirements including product durability, reusability, upgradability, reparability and energy & resource efficiency, it added. There are norms regarding substances that restrict circularity, recycled content, remanufacturing, recycling, and environmental footprints.

Hybrid duty relief may hurt petrol, diesel cars: Hyundai

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New Delhi: Hyundai has joined local car companies — Tata Motors and Mahindra — in raising objections to any duty relaxations for hybrid vehicles, saying such a measure has the potential to disturb sales of petrol and diesel vehicles.

The demand for lower duty on hybrids is being raised by top Japanese companies such as Maruti Suzuki, Toyota and Honda, which argue that the technology helps reduce emissions while boosting fuel efficiency.

In the documents filed with Sebi for its maiden IPO, Hyundai said, “... with the objective to address climate issues, govt of India proposes to reduce GST on hybrid

Stock hits new high in Korea on IPO plan

Plans for what may be one of India's largest-ever IPOs boosted Hyundai Motor's stock to a record high in South Korea. The company is selling a 17.5% stake in Hyundai Motor India, according to its draft red herring prospectus. Shares of Hyundai — which will collect all of the proceeds from the IPO of its local unit — rose 4% on Monday in Seoul. Hyundai is seeking to raise about \$2.5 billion in the IPO, with a potential listing planned by the end of the year. Shares of Maruti's parent Suzuki fell 3.6% in Tokyo, while Indian markets were closed. **BLOOMBERG**

passenger vehicles to 5% and 12% on flex engines, while the GST on diesel and petrol vehicles is proposed to remain at 28%... In the event such amendment becomes effective, it could have an adverse impact on the sales volumes of our diesel and petrol vehicles which could affect our margins, business, and results of operations.”

Tata Motors and Mahindra have already been opposing any special benefits for hybrids. The two companies have said only electric vehicles should get the special 5% GST rate, emphasising that only “zero emission vehicles” should get benefits and not those that offer only “fuel efficiency improvement technologies”.

Why freelance techies are in demand

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Bengaluru: The gig workforce is emerging as one of the levers for enterprises to bridge the tech talent demand-supply gap. Gig workers get paid from \$5 per hour for basic work, while mid-level prompt engineers, prompt engineering specialists, and senior AI engineers can make from \$15 to \$400 per hour, respectively, depending on the complexity of the programmes.

Covid has transformed the talent landscape, and enabled firms to tap into the gig talent pool. Hiring gig workers provides access to a larger talent base, while saving on additional recruiting costs. Anshuman Chaubey, a freelance techie with five ye-

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- Digital marketing
- Content management
- Sourcing and recruitment
- UI/UX design, data science

Source: Nasscom Aon report

ars of experience, exemplifies this trend. He began taking up gig roles after completing internship at an MNC and now has a team of four developers assisting him with the increased workload.

Job portal foundit.com reports that IT-related gig work makes up 30% of the job market, up from 12% at

the end of March. Software development, data analytics and UI/UX design are the most sought-after skills in the gig space.

According to a Nasscom Aon report, India's tech gig workforce is projected to reach 23.5 million by 2030 — up from 7 million in 2021. This means gig workers will constitute 4.1% of the total workforce in India by fiscal 2030, compared to 1.5% in FY22.

Manpower Group, an HR solutions firm, has observed a 10% increase in demand for IT gig work compared to the previous year. Sanju Ballurkar, president of Experis, a subsidiary of Manpower Group specialising in tech staffing, said, “Gig is becoming accepted from a customer's perspective as it is a mo-

re efficient way for non-tech companies to get tech work done without investing in a full-fledged IT team.”

Pharma companies, oil and gas firms, and tech firms are the primary users of gig workers for accelerating their tech road maps. Troogue.ai, a gig working platform, said 85% of the projects on their platform are outsourced by GCCs seeking gig workers or contractors. As companies aim to reduce costs, more opportunities for gig work are expected to emerge.

Gig work is primarily available for those with specialised skills in cloud, data, and cybersecurity, where firms require expertise to work on hybrid cloud strategies bound by data governance and compliance frameworks.

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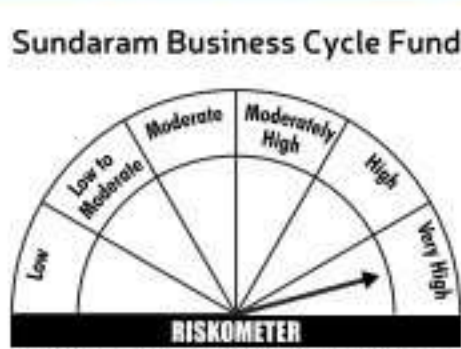
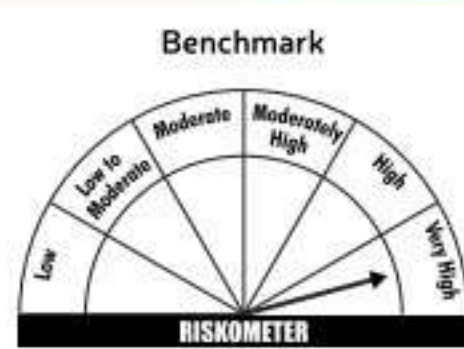
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World No. 48 Slovakia Make Most Of Wayward Lukaku, Disallowed Goals To Upset World No. 3 Team

Frankfurt: Two Romelu Lukaku goals were ruled out by video review and Belgium fell to a stunning 1-0 loss to Slovakia in wild Group D at the European Championship on Monday. Francesco Calzona's side are 45 spots below third-placed Belgium in FIFA's world rankings. But they made a mockery of the supposed quality gap between the teams with a courageous performance in Frankfurt. Calzona, who also served as Napoli's interim boss in the second half of last season, had admitted he would be "delighted" with a draw. The Italian got more than he could have dreamed of as Schranz left Belgium reeling after ending his nine-game international goal drought.

Romelu Lukaku missed a host of chances for Belgium and had a late equaliser controversially disallowed by VAR. Slovakia's unexpected victory blew Group E wide open, just hours after Romania beat Ukraine 3-0 in Monday's other match in that pool.



BELGIUM 0
SLOVAKIA 1
Schranz 7

It was a bitter loss for Belgium. Belgium's golden generation has lost much of its lustre since they crashed out of the 2022 World Cup in the group stage. Dominic Tedesco was appointed to replace Roberto Martinez in February 2023 and led Belgium on a

14-match unbeaten run heading into the Euros. Playing in a Belgian record 11th game at major tournaments, Lukaku should have bagged his 86th goal for his country in the second minute. Jeremy Doku turned adroitly on

the halfway line and accelerated menacingly into the Slovakia penalty area, where his cross was poked toward Lukaku by De Bruyne. Lukaku looked certain to score but his close-range effort was straight at Slovakia keeper Martin Dubravka. AFP

GOAL, INTERRUPTED! Romelu Lukaku and mates celebrate prematurely before the goal is disallowed

Belgium		Slovakia
16	Shots	10
6	On target	4
61%	Possession	39%
573	Passes	367
85%	Pass accuracy	77%
14	Fouls	10
3	Yellow cards	1
0	Red Cards	0
5	Corners	7

TONIGHT'S TUSSLES	
Turkey vs Georgia	9.30pm
Portugal vs Czech Rep	12.30am
Live on Sony Sports Network	

15 Belgium were unbeaten in their last 15 matches (W10 D5). Their last defeat before Monday's loss was to Morocco in the 2022 World Cup.

STATS THE WAY

TEAMS	P	W	D	L	GD	Pt
Ger	1	1	0	0	4	3
Swi	1	1	0	0	2	3
Hun	1	0	0	1	-2	0
Sco	1	0	0	1	-4	0

GROUP B

TEAMS	P	W	D	L	GD	Pt
Spain	1	1	0	0	3	3
Italy	1	1	0	0	1	3
Alb	1	0	0	1	-1	0
Cro	1	0	0	1	-3	0

GROUP C

TEAMS	P	W	D	L	GD	Pt
Eng	1	1	0	0	1	3
Den	1	0	1	0	0	1
Slo'nia	1	0	1	0	0	1
Serbia	1	0	0	1	-1	0

IT'S REAL FOR MBAPPE, SO IT'S A NO FOR PARIS OLY

Kylian Mbappe confirmed on Sunday he will not play for France's Olympic team at the Paris Games as his new club Real Madrid are against the idea.

The 25-year-old said in March that he was keen on playing at his home Games but since the Olympic soccer tournament is not on FIFA's calendar clubs are not obliged to release their players. Mbappe was not named in a 25-man preliminary squad for the Olympics, though coach Thierry Henry left the door open.

"My club's position was very clear, so from that moment on, I knew I won't be taking part in the Games," Mbappe said.

"That's just the way it is, and I understand that too. I'm joining a new team in September, so it's not the best way to start an adventure," he said. "I'm going to wish this French team all the best. I'm going to watch every game. I hope they'll win the gold medal." The men's Olympic football competition begins on July 24, 10 days after the Euro final, and ends on Aug. 9. REUTERS

Sharp Romania sink error-prone Ukraine

Munich: Romania recorded only their second ever victory at the European Championship — and their first in 24 years — with a 3-0 win over Ukraine on Monday to give coach Edward Iordanescu a late birthday present.

Nicolae Stanciu put Romania ahead with a long-range strike in the first half before two quickfire goals from Razvan Marin and Denis Mihai Dragus early in the second half.

It was Romania's first win at a major tournament since a surprise 3-2 triumph over England at Euro 2000 and the players danced joyously in front of their yellow-clad fans after the final whistle.

Iordanescu, who was the first coach to lead a Romania team at a European Championship since his father Anghel in 1966, turned 46 years old on Sunday.

ROMANIA	3
Stanciu 29, Marin 53, Dragus 57	
UKRAINE	0

Stanciu also hit the bar as Romania thoroughly beat Ukraine, which is playing at Euro 2024 amid the backdrop of war at home and hoping to give its citizens some joy even as Russian missiles keep raining down on the country. The Ukrainian soccer federation unveiled an installation in Munich of a stadium stand destroyed by Russian troops in May 2022 to highlight the ongoing conflict ahead of the match.

It was Romania's first appearance in a major tournament for eight years and several of the players were in tears as the national anthem rang out.



STATS THE WAY		
Romania		Ukraine
9	Shots	13
5	On target	2
28%	Possession	72%
237	Passes	591
72%	Pass accuracy	87%
9	Fouls	8
1	Yellow cards	1
0	Red Cards	0
4	Corners	8

GROUP E

TEAMS	P	W	D	L	GD	Pt
Rom	1	1	0	0	3	3
Svk	1	1	0	0	1	3
Bel	1	0	0	1	-1	0
Ukr	1	0	0	1	-3	0

3 This is just the second time that Romania have scored three goals in a Euro match, after the 3-2 victory against England in 2000.

“We've had golden generations with big performances but this generation represents the soul.”
—Iordanescu | ROMANIA COACH

“Fans were unique. We've never felt anything like this before. My siblings, my father and my wife all had tears in their eyes. I'd like to thank them all and I hope we've made them very happy today. We have to thank everyone and I hope they'll celebrate. What we did today was just sensational.”
—Stanciu ON ROMANIA'S OPENING GOAL



POIGNANT: Draped in the Ukrainian flag, a girl stands by destroyed seating from war-torn Kharkiv's Soniachny stadium which was put up as art installation in Munich on Monday, as Ukraine prepared to play their opening game against Romania

Czechs call in Schick as Ronaldo waits

Leipzig: The joint top scorers at the last European Championship will face each other as Cristiano Ronaldo's Portugal play Patrik Schick's Czech Republic in their Euro 2024 Group F opener on Tuesday.

Ronaldo and Schick both scored five at the Covid-delayed Euro 2020 and are likely to shoulder the goal-scoring burden for their sides this time around.

The tournament could be Ronaldo's international swansong, although the 39-year-old appears as hungry for goals and adulation as ever as he prepares to kick off his sixth Euros.

PREVIEWS While he may have moved away from Europe's elite to play in Saudi Arabia, the goal-getting instincts of the leading scorer in men's international football seem as razor sharp as ever.

Having finished second-top scorer in qualifying with 10 goals and smashed 35 in 31 league games for Al-Nassr last season, the seemingly ageless Ronaldo warmed up for the tournament with a brace in their final friendly against Ireland.

While Ronaldo lifted the trophy in 2016, he may still be harbouring a sense of unfinished business on the international stage. Having sat out most of that final eight years ago through injury, he has failed to propel Portugal to further glory at two subsequent World Cups or at Euro 2020, when they were knocked out in the last 16. This has been one of Portugal's most gilded generations but with Ronaldo and 41-year-old defender Pepe in the twilight of their careers,



Euro 2024 has the feel of a last hurrah. They won all of their 10 games in the qualifiers, scoring 36 and conceding twice.

TURKEY AIM TO BOUNCE BACK FROM EURO FLOP AGAINST DEBUTANTS GEORGIA
Dortmund: Turkey begin their Euro 2024 campaign against newcomers Georgia on Tuesday knowing a winning start in one of the tournament's weaker groups would

ASSISTANT RONALDO Ronaldo is on the verge of breaking the record for the most assists in Euros history. He's currently just one assist behind former Manchester United winger Karel Poborsky, who has eight assists to his name. Poborsky accumulated these assists for the Czech Republic across three tournaments - three in 1996, one in 2000 and four in 2004.

PORTUGAL VS CZECH REP.
Leipzig Stadium
HEAD TO HEAD (5 games)
PORTUGAL WON 4 DRAWS 0
CZECH REP. WON 1
FORM GUIDE
PORTUGAL
W L W L W
CZECH REP.
W W W W W
(most recent first)

TURKEY VS GEORGIA
BVB Stadion Dortmund
HEAD TO HEAD (5 games)
TURKEY WON 3 DRAW 1
GEORGIA WON 1
FORM GUIDE
TURKEY
L D L L D
GEORGIA
W D W L D
(most recent first)

give them a great chance of making the knockout stages after disappointing last time around.

In Euro 2020, Turkey crashed out having lost all three group-stage games but they impressed in the qualifying. Turkey's ambitions rest on captain and midfielder Hakan Calhanoglu, a key part of Inter Milan's Serie A-winning side.

Hopes are also high for attacking midfielder Arda Guler after the 19-year-old came back from injury to

score five goals in five games at the end of Real Madrid's victorious La Liga campaign. Georgia, meanwhile, are playing in their first ever major tournament. Their slim prospects of qualifying for the last 16 will rest largely on the shoulders of talisman Khvicha Kvaratskhelia. "It was the greatest dream of every Georgian to become a part of such an important tournament, and it was the happiest day for all of us when we achieved it," Kvaratskhelia said. AGENCIES

“I believe we all have the highest ambitions and that's clear to see. We could be knocked out in the group stage, or we could win it. These are the two possible options.”
—Ivan Hasek, CZECH REP. COACH

“It's 21 years on top. I don't see anyone like him in terms of being in a national team for so long. That's due to his talent and hard work. He's our captain and we are very happy to have him here with us.”
—Joao Cancelo on playing with Ronaldo at the striker's sixth Euro

Jude takes an old team and makes it better

Bellingham Hitting All The Right Notes This Season As Goal Against Serbia Gives Eng A Winning Start

Gelsenkirchen: Jude Bellingham is the star of Kim Kardashian's male underwear range, England icon David Beckham mimics his trademark goal celebration, and a Beatles classic has become his anthem as adoring fans serenade him with "Hey Jude" when he's on the field.

Bellingham, it seems, can do no wrong.

No surprise then that he was the player to get England off to a winning start with a first-half goal to beat Serbia 1-0 in Gelsenkirchen on Sunday. "Every game I feel like I can make an impact, I feel like I can decide games," the Real Madrid star said. "I really enjoy playing football so when I go out there, I play with a fearlessness because I love doing it so much. It is a release for me."

Wearing the No. 10 jersey once adorned by Wayne Rooney, the midfielder stooped to head in Bukayo Saka's cross in the 13th minute. Bellingham raced away, arms outstretched in a pose that Madrid fans have grown to love and Beckham has replicated on social media in tribute to a player who doesn't turn 21 until later this month.

And he's got no problem with the song supporters have attached to him. "I listen to the Beatles a lot. My style of music is a bit old so that is right up my street," he said.

The 20-year-old was named Player of the Match after setting the tempo for much of England's attacking play and was cheered to the rafters by their fans at the cavernous Arena AufSchalke.

"I really enjoy playing in front of the England fans. It's a different experience for me because obviously I

play abroad. So when I can hear an English crowd for the first time every few months, I really enjoy it.

"They give me a lot of appreciation, a lot of love. And I try to give that back with my performances and my energy on the pitch."

"I felt really confident coming into the game. I couldn't wait to play such an amazing tournament alongside such amazing group of players. So I think you could see that I was enjoying my football and wanted to make an impact," Bellingham said.

"We wanted to get the ball away from them because I think we wanted to build an energy for the fans to get behind the team. And when you're aggressive, it helps in that, trying to be aggressive without the ball as well. "Yeah, I took a few kicks, but I think it's something I've kind of gotten used to over the last couple of years. And it's about trying to react to the right way and not lose my head. I think I handled that well tonight."

Bellingham has already done his talking on the field after a spectacular debut season at Madrid where he scored 23 goals, won the Spanish title and the Champions League.

He is also making a splash off it. Like Beckham, his appeal goes far beyond soccer. Presumably that was what Kardashian knew after Bellingham was chosen to front the menswear range of her SKIMS underwear. He's also the star of a campaign for sportswear giant Adidas, which features Beckham, who is just another of Bellingham's many fans.

So much, so soon for someone so young could be seen as a cause for concern.

But Bellingham is not your av-



NOT ALL TALK: Kieran Trippier (right) joins Jude Bellingham as he celebrates his goal against Serbia

erage player. "He writes his own script," England manager Gareth Southgate said. Having already played at the last Euros and the World Cup in 2022, Bellingham is the first European player to appear at three major inter-

national tournaments before the age of 21, according to statistician, Opta.

His goal was certainly the story of the game — sending England to the top of Group C after Denmark drew 1-1 with Slovenia. Christian Eriksen scored for the Danes — three years

'WOLF PACK CELEBRATION FOR BACKROOM STAFF'

Gelsenkirchen: Jude Bellingham said his "wolf" celebration with Trent Alexander-Arnold after scoring the goal was a nod to the backroom staff.

The 20-year-old celebrated bowing on one knee alongside Liverpool's Alexander-Arnold as they both covered their faces with one hand.

"The celebration was from a game we play called 'Wolf' and one of the staff always holds his face like that when he doesn't know what's going on," said Bellingham. "So it was more a celebration for the backroom staff who put in so much work every day and they won't receive any awards like this (man-of-the-match trophy)."

The game in question is a murder mystery and sees one player selected as the 'wolf', while everybody has their eyes closed, with the others then having to work out who was picked. AFP

after suffering a cardiac arrest on the field at the last Euros.

England plays Denmark in Frankfurt on Thursday.

England was a beaten finalist at the last Euros, losing on penalties to Italy in the final three years ago. It is one of the favourites to go one better this time around.

But off-field issues overshadowed the buildup to the game against Serbia, which had been deemed high risk due to concerns about violence between rival supporters. Some of those fears were realized when police rushed to separate brawling fans in Gelsenkirchen earlier in the day.

Social media footage showed men throwing chairs at each other outside a restaurant festooned with Serbian flags in the city.

Inside the stadium there were boos during the anthems. Soon, England fans were celebrating once the game got underway after Bellingham's decisive moment.

KOHLI LOOKS FOR NET GAINS

TIMES IN THE CARIBBEAN
Dwaipayan.Datta@timesgroup.com

Bridgetown: There's a tip for the Virat Kohli fans. If you really love watching the man bat, try getting into one of India's net sessions. And if it's from 45 yards just behind the stumps under the shadow of a Garry Sobers statue at the Kensington Oval, you're a lucky guy. The comfort cushion of the 'exhibition leg' of the T20 World Cup, in the USA, is over. Now, under the sweltering sun of Barbados, India are preparing for their first Super 8 game against Afghanistan on Thursday.

The team reached the city of Sobers, the 3 Ws, Malcolm Marshall and many others on Sunday and hit the ground running first thing on Monday. Despite the feel-good factor about the three victories in the USA leg, Kohli's scores of 1, 4 and 0 wouldn't have made him happy. The champion's body language in front of cameras during practice doesn't betray any sense of unease, but deep down he would be bothered.

And it's this hunger to turn things around and make it his World Cup that seemed to be driving the modern master when he took guard against the best bowler in the world — Jasprit Bumrah.

The Mumbai Indians man wasn't being friendly to Kohli at all in the nets, at least with the ball. It virtually felt like game-time as Bumrah explored his arsenal. "It doesn't worry us at all that Kohli hasn't got runs in the games in the US. He has been batting beautifully at the nets and he looks all the more hungry." Team India batting coach Vikram Rathour had said after the Miami washout on Saturday.

Rathour was absolutely right. The short balls aimed at Kohli's rib-cage were pulled ferociously while the ones pitched up were driven beautifully on Monday.

Kohli, playing as opener in the World Cup, quite clearly is looking to hit top gear right from the word go, even if he is coming off a rough patch.

A game against Afghanistan also entails dealing with wrist-spin. They have the wizard Rashid Khan and baby-faced chinaman Noor Ahmed in their ranks. Kohli needs to prepare for that and who better than Yuzvendra Chahal and Kuldeep Yadav to provide necessary practice? While Chahal isn't India's No. 1 wrist-spin choice, Kuldeep is



ON THE BALL: Virat Kohli and the Indian team played some beach volleyball on Sunday before hitting the nets in Barbados

Star Batter Sweats It Out Against Bumrah & Co. At The Kensington Oval Practice Arena After Meagre Returns In The US Leg Of The Tournament

Hope floats in Barbados, mecca of Windies cricket

The T20 World Cup Has Found A Happy Haven In An Island Which Has A Deep Bond With The Game
Dwaipayan.Datta@timesgroup.com

Bridgetown: Welcome to cricket paradise! After two weeks in the United States of America, where cricket is what baseball is to India, Sir Garfield Sobers greets you at the Barbados airport. Well, not quite Sir Garry himself, but a massive cut-out of the legendary allrounder playing the iconic off-drive.

Right from the moment you get down from the plane, you know that there's a festival of cricket happening in this part of the world. No, there aren't mad crowds waiting to catch a glimpse of cricket stars at the airport, but a quiet recognition of the fact that there's a World Cup to savour.

At first glance, it seems like a tale of two World Cups. The authorities in the USA did their absolute best to help the sport get a few eyeballs, but you could see that they were trying so hard. Here, it's all so effortless, starting from the volunteer at the airport — wearing a T20 World Cup shirt and helping you find your way around — to the receptionist at the hotel lobby who's watching the Bangladesh-Nepal match on TV with keen interest.

Barbados — which has the look and feel of Goa — is spread over 166 square miles and is probably the unofficial cricket capital of the West Indies. In every nook and cranny, you'll feel how deep the legacy of cricket is. "A little far down is the burial ground of Malcolm Marshall," someone tells you, while somebody else suggests you should go to Bridgetown University and see the statues of the 3Ws.

The massive posters of home boys Sobers, Joel Garner, Everton Weekes and Frank Worrell at the airport tell you that this is the place where you want to be if you love your cricket. The conversations at the immigration counter to the taxi-stand to the beach all revolve around cricket. There's a serious sense of anticipation here as the business end of the World Cup begins. But it's not exactly a 'selfie culture' with the stars, an idea we have come to associate with Team India and its fans. The bond goes beyond that.

"Big stars? Oh yeah, if you're a cab driver in Barbados for 20 years, you might have driven Sir Garry once or

twice. At least I have. And then there are so many, Garner stays close to my place, you start chatting with him on cricket and he doesn't stop," Geoff, a cab driver, said.

And then you meet Solly, a man in his 40s, originally from Surat, who grew up playing with Irfan and Yusuf Pathan and now runs a business here and plays his club cricket with Dwayne Smith and Kyle Mayers, among others. "We go on with our lives, but come weekends, without fail, it's all about cricket," Solly says.



LET'S PLAY: A cut-out of Sir Garfield Sobers greets passengers at the Barbados airport. The T20 World Cup may not have enthused locals in USA, but this storied island has been gripped by cricket fever

But in the voice of the elderly waiter at the beachside hotel, you can hear that tinge of sadness that's become a part and parcel of West Indies cricket. "For us, cricket was our only sport. Don't know what happened, where we went wrong? My sons and nephews are into basketball and football," Royce says while serving fish and beer.

The West Indies' failure to qualify for the ODI World Cup was a humiliation for this generation, which grew up watching Clive Lloyd's team winning the first two, still can't come to terms with. For them, T20 isn't the format that decides world champions. Nevertheless, a good show will be like a balm.

"Tickets for the final here on June 29 are sold out. I couldn't manage to get one. West Indies aren't doing too badly but I don't have faith in them. If they can't win, let it be India, they have such good players. In our taxi-stand, there's this old TV, and in between our rides, we watch Indian cricketers in the IPL," Geoff said.

He is right, the Rohits and Virats are in a different league. But if you're a cricket romantic walking down the winding roads of Bridgetown on a lazy afternoon, you may just say a silent prayer hoping Geoff's first wish comes true.

Bangladesh qualify, but batting woes worry skipper Shanto

Kingstown (St Vincent): Delighted with his team's progression to the Super Eight, but disappointed by the batting performance so far, Bangladesh skipper Najmul Hossain Shanto said he is yet to figure out why his batters have not been up to the mark in the ongoing T20 World Cup. Bangladesh managed to trump Nepal by 21 runs to seal their place in the Super Eights. However, getting shot out for 106 put them in a spot of bother before their bowlers managed to get the job done.

"First of all, very happy that we are going to play Super Eights, and yeah, our batting is not up to the mark. But, the way our bowlers bowled in the last three-four matches, really happy," Shanto said during the post-match on Sunday.

"I hope they will continue their form, and as a batting

group, we need to do our proper planning so that we can come back in the next round."

Shanto admitted that the side's batting failures have been hard to decipher but he rejected suggestions that slow pitches were a reason. Bangladesh have gone past the 150-run mark just once in this tournament, against the Netherlands. "I hope they (the bowlers) make us win every day; that's what I hope for, but the batters also have a responsibility. And why it is not happening, everyone is trying to find out. But it is not acceptable," he said.

"The wicket is not the issue. This was a wicket where you can score 140-150 runs, maybe which we could not do. So, it is definitely a reason for us to worry," he said.

Despite managing scores close to 130, the team has emerged triumphant in three games and the only defeat so far has come against South Africa. Shanto emphasised the importance of getting a good start from his batters.

Bangladesh will play their Super Eight opener against Australia on Thursday in Antigua, followed by India two days later at the same venue before finishing off against Afghanistan on June 24 here.

Brief scores: Bangladesh 106 in 19.3 overs (Sompal Kami 2/10) bt Nepal 85 in 19.2 overs (Tanzim Hasan Sakib 4/7, Shakib Al Hasan 2/9, Mustafizur Rahman 3/7).

TANZIM'S STATS

OVERS	4
MAIDENS	2
RUNS	7
WICKETS	4
ER	1.75
SR	6.0

"I hope they (the bowlers) make us win every day; that's what I hope for, but the batters also have a responsibility. And why it is not happening, everyone is trying to find out. But it is not acceptable."
—NAJMUL HOSSAIN SHANTO, BANDESH SKIPPER

BABAR AZAM'S CAPTAINCY RECORD

Format	M	W	L	T	D/NR	Win%
Tests	20	10	6	0	4	50.00
ODIs	43	26	15	1	1	63.09
T20Is	85	48	29	1	7	62.17
ODI WC	9	4	5	0	0	44.44
T20 WC	17	11	5	1	0	67.64

—All Stats: Rajesh Kumar

FACE-OFF

WI

VS

AF

TV TIMES 6 AM

STAR SPORTS

HOTSTAR

HEAD TO HEAD

WI	AF
1	0

LAST FIVE MATCHES

WI	W	W	W	W	W
AF	W	W	W	W	W

VENUE: GROS ISLET

ODDS

WI	AF
7/10	12/10

NUMBERS GAME

1 In the only T20 World Cup fixture between the two teams, Afghanistan (123-7) defeated West Indies (117-8) by six runs at Nagpur on March 27, 2016.

9.8 Strike rate of Alzarri Joseph while claiming 14 wickets at 10.14 runs apiece in six matches at an economy rate of 6.17 — the best among West Indian bowlers with 10-plus wickets in T20 World Cup.

Under-fire Babar not quitting captaincy yet

Fort Lauderdale (Florida): Pakistan skipper Babar Azam hasn't yet thought about quitting captaincy despite his team's group-stage exit from the T20 World Cup, insisting that any decision on the matter will be taken only after discussions with the PCB.

The 2009 champions and also the finalists of 2007 and 2022 editions, lost to USA and India in their first two games to exit the tournament even before the Super Eights. Having faced massive criticism, the Pakistan skipper hit back when asked if he has any plans to tender his resignation.

"When I go back, we will discuss all the things that happened here. And if I have to leave the captaincy, this decision, I will tell

you openly. I will not announce anything behind the scenes. Whatever happens, will happen in front of you," Babar said after Pakistan ended their group league campaign with a three-wicket win over Ireland.

Babar said it was the PCB which reinstated him and whether he continues or not, will be their call. "I have not thought about it. The decision is of the PCB," he said, asserting that he never asked for a leadership role.

"About the captaincy — when I had left it (after ODI World Cup), I thought that I shouldn't be doing it now, that's why I left it and I announced it myself. Then when they gave it back to me, it was the decision of the PCB."

Babar was visibly miffed at being repeatedly probed about his future as a leader and told the assembled media that one person cannot be blamed for team's losses. "Everyone is sad. As a team, we did not play. I told you that we did not lose because of one person," he told a probing scribe.

"We are losing as a team. I am not saying this because of one person. You are pointing that out because of the captain, I cannot play in every player's place. There are 11 players and each of them has a role. I think as a team, we have not been able to apply, follow and finish things. We have to settle down and accept that we didn't play well as a team."

Imad Wasim, in a media inter-

action, had spoken how Pakistan have failed to change their archaic style of T20 cricket at a time when the world order in the shortest format had undergone a sea change. Babar partially agreed with Imad's assertion.

"I think eight to nine players are the same guys who have been playing for the last four years. They should not fear. They are being backed," he said.

Batting is an area of concern he admitted. "You need to assess the conditions, what's the demand here. If you follow that then—tell me how many matches here (in USA) has seen outstanding batting. There's been a struggle, but you need to be proactive about what's required here." ❧

WI, Af look to maintain momentum

Gros Islet (Saint Lucia): Hosts West Indies and much-improved Afghanistan will indulge in a battle of one-upmanship and strive to gain momentum for the Super Eight stage when they take on each other in their final group stage game of the T20 World Cup.

After starting off with a scrappy win over Papua New Guinea, West Indies are slowly but steadily finding their rhythm. They brushed aside Uganda and New Zealand. Afghanistan, on the other hand, have had a flawless campaign so far. Rashid Khan & Co are enjoying the conditions that the Caribbean pitches are offering.

Gaining momentum is the only thing at stake in the final Group C clash with both teams having qualified for the Super Eights. "Momentum is a very important word for us it's important for us to keep playing good cricket and consistent cricket," West Indies skipper Rovman Powell said on the eve of the game.

"After this game the Super 8 is very, very important so you want players going into the Super 8 with good performances, you want to go in the Super 8 as



"AFTER THIS GAME THE SUPER 8 IS VERY, VERY IMPORTANT SO YOU WANT PLAYERS GOING INTO THE SUPER 8 WITH GOOD PERFORMANCES, YOU WANT TO GO IN THE SUPER 8 AS A TEAM WINNING."
—ROVMAN POWELL | WI SKIPPER

a team winning."

That opener Rahamanullah Gurbaz (167 runs) and pacer Fazalhaq Farooqi (12 wickets) are currently leading the chart of run-makers and wicket-takers respectively is a just reflection of their fine run in this ICC showpiece.

Besides Gurbaz, the experienced Ibrahim Zadran has also made significant contributions collecting 114 runs with a highest score of 70. But the Afghans who have a lot of right hand batters will have their task cut out against left-arm spinners Akeal Hosein and Gudakesh Motie.

The Afghans themselves will be without off spinner Mujeeb Ur Rahman, who

has been ruled out of the tournament due to a finger injury. However, they have no dearth of spinners with the likes of skipper Rashid and young Noor Ahmad, who bowled economically against Papua New Guinea and New Zealand, in their ranks.

"It's been three good games but realising there's a lot more than three games to go obviously tomorrow and then three more in the group stage and hopefully beyond," Afghanistan head coach Jonathan Trott said.

"That's the focus but we're not worried about looking too far ahead the focus obviously the main goal is to go as far as we can and achieve things that no other Afghanistan team has done before." ❧

LANKA SIGN OFF WITH A CONSOLATION WIN

Gros Islet (Saint Lucia): Sri Lanka finally found their mojo as they clinically disposed off the Netherlands by 83 runs in an inconsequential final Group D game.

With Bangladesh beating Nepal by 21 runs in the other group game, the faint outside chance that the Netherlands had despite was up in smoke as they were bowled out for 118 in pursuit of an improbable target of 202 set by Wanindu Hasaranga's men. The Sri Lankans left it too late while bringing their A game to the fore as all three units fired in unison but the horse has already bolted as they

were out of reckoning for the Super 8s. Angelo Mathews (30 off 15 balls) and Hasaranga (20 off 10 balls) shored up the scoring rate but it was left-hander Charith Asalanka's 21-ball-46 that was the real difference in their innings as Sri Lanka crossed the 200-run mark. **Brief scores:** Sri Lanka 201-6 (Kusal Mendis 46, Charith Asalanka 46; Dhananjaya de Silva 34, Angelo Mathews 30*) beat Netherlands 118 (Michael Levitt 31, Scott Edwards 31; Nuwan Thushara 3-24, Maheesha Pathirana 2-12, Wanindu Hasaranga 2-25) by 83 runs.

MENON BREAKS VENKAT'S INDIAN RECORD FOR UMPIRING IN MOST INTERNATIONAL MATCHES

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Mumbai: ICC Elite panel umpire Nitin Menon created history by officiating in the most number of international matches by an Indian as an on-field umpire. He surpassed the record held by former India off-spinner S Venkataraghavan for more than 20 years when he stood in the Australia vs Namibia clash at North Sound. Menon has officiated in 23 Tests, 58

ODIs and 45 T20Is (126 matches overall) as an on-field umpire. Venkataraghavan officiated in 73 Tests and 52 ODIs (125 matches). Menon is India's only umpire in the Elite Panel. The 40-year-old from Indore officiated in the third Ashes Test at Headingley, Leeds, last year. Along with Sri Lanka's Kumar Dharmasena, Menon officiated the 2023 World Cup opener between England and New Zealand in Ahmedabad on Oct 5 and in the semifinal of the World Cup between Australia and South Africa at Eden Gardens and all the four Tests of the Border-Gavaskar series in Feb-March in India last year.

GALLERY

Diksha finishes T-6 in Rome for 3rd Top-10 in 2024

Rome: Diksha Dagar carded an underwhelming 71 in the final round to sign off from the Ladies Italian Open at tied-6th place, her third Top-10 finish of the season. Diksha, who had one birdie and one bogey in the second round, managed just two birdies and one bogey in the third for a total of 6-under 210.

Ferrari hang on for second consecutive Le Mans crown: Ferrari made it two in a row as it outlasted Toyota to win a weather-affected 24 Hours of Le Mans with the trio of Nicklas Nielsen, Antonio Fuoco and Miguel Molina crossing the line in the No. 50 car 14 seconds ahead of the No. 7 of Nyck de Vries, Kamui Kobayashi and Jose Maria Lopez.

Estonia batter smashes quickest T20 ton, hits most sixes: Estonia batter Sahil Chauhan smashed the quickest T20 century (in 27 balls) and struck most number of sixes (18) in the format in an international game against hosts Cyprus. Chauhan broke Jan-Nicol Loftie Eaton's record for the fastest T20I hundred, which came off 33 balls and lasted less than four months. It was also the fastest century in all T20s, eclipsing Chris Gayle's 30-ball innings in IPL 2013.

Sabalenko to skip Olympics to prioritize 'health': World number three Aryna Sabalenka said on Monday she will miss the tennis event at the Paris Olympics "to take care of her health".

ACTION TODAY

BASKETBALL: NBA Finals, 6 am (Jio); **CRICKET:** ICC T20 WC, WI vs Afg, 6 am (Star); **FOOTBALL:** Euro 2024, Turkey vs Georgia, 9.30 pm; Portugal vs Czechia, 12.30 am Wednesday (Sony); **TENNIS:** Halle Open, 3.30 pm; ATP-500 London, 8 pm (Eurosport)

AIFF sacks coach Stimac, ready for legal battle

Marcus.Mergulhao
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Panaji: The All India Football Federation (AIFF) is bracing itself for a legal battle after sacking Igor Stimac, ending his five-year reign as head coach of the senior men's national team. Stimac, a World Cup bronze medal winner in 1998 and formerly coach of the Croatian national team, joined India in 2019. He was in charge for 53 matches, winning 19, drawing 14 and losing 20.

The Croatian had come under heavy pressure since India's failure to score a goal, or pick up a point, during the three group-stage games at the Asian Cup 2023 in Qatar early this year. The team ended with the worst performance among the 24 participating teams.

When India failed to qualify

for the third round of the FIFA World Cup qualifiers, despite winning the first game against Kuwait, the writing was on the wall. The only hindrance was his contract that ran till June 2026, without any clause for termination with a standard three-month compensation.

"Stimac had publicly said that he would resign if he does not take India to the third round (of the World Cup qualifiers). India exited on June 11 and since then we have not heard anything from him. This decision has been taken in national interest. Compensation is secondary," a senior AIFF official told TOI.

The decision to sack Stimac had the unequivocal support of AIFF president Kalyan Chaubey and was stamped during a virtual meeting of senior officials, led by vice

president NA Harris. Technical committee chairman IM Vijayan and acting secretary general M. Satyanarayan were also present.

"Noting the disappointing outcome of the senior men's national team's FIFA World Cup 2026 qualification campaign, the members unanimously agreed that a new head coach would be best placed to take the team forward," the AIFF said in a statement on Monday. "A notice of termination has been issued to Stimac by the AIFF Secretariat. He stands relieved of his obligations with immediate effect."

Stimac draws a monthly salary of \$30,000 (Rs 25 lakh approximately) and in the absence of a severance clause in his new contract signed on October 5, 2023, AIFF may have to pay a huge compensa-

IGOR AS INDIA COACH

Matches: 53; **Won:** 19; **Drawn:** 14; **Lost:** 20
Trophies won - 4: SAFF Cup (2021, 2023), Inter Continental Cup (2023), Tri Nation Cup (2023)
Biggest win: India 4 Hong Kong 0 (AFC Asian Cup Qualifiers, Kolkata on June 14, 2022); India 4 Pakistan 0 (SAFF Cup, Bengaluru June 21, 2023)
Heaviest loss: UAE 6 India 0 (Friendly, Dubai on Mar 29, 2021)

—Gautam Roy



IGOR STIMAC

tion, or in a worst-case scenario, the entirety of his remaining contract value which amounts to Rs 6 crore.

AIFF officials, however, believe they have a case against the coach and are ready for a legal battle, either at FIFA's adjudicating bodies

or the court of arbitration for sport (CAS), which is the world's premier forum for resolving sporting disputes.

"AIFF offered Stimac a three-month salary for mutually terminating the contract. He did not agree. We could not afford to drag this for more

time and decided to bring an end to this chapter," said another official.

India will next feature in a tri-nation tournament at home during the Sept window and the AIFF plans to have a coach in place before July end. When Stimac took charge of the national team, he promised to change the mindset and make India punch above their weight.

The Croatian presided over India's best year in terms of silverware in 2023 when the team won a record three trophies (Tri-Nation, Inter-Continental and SAFF Championship) broke into the top 100 of FIFA rankings (now 121) and recorded their best-ever run of clean sheets.

It won him a new better contract, but 2024 turned out to be disastrous.

DOUGHTY DECHAMBEAU WINS US OPEN AS RORY SLUMPS

American Triumphs By Just One Shot, Bags \$4.3m In Prize Money

Pinehurst: Bryson DeChambeau came out on top in a dramatic final round, back nine battle with Rory McIlroy to win the US Open by one shot on Sunday as the Northern Irishman's major misery continued at Pinehurst resort in North Carolina.

Poised to end a decade long major drought, McIlroy collapsed at the finish with bogey's on three of his final four holes, including a heart-breaker at the 18th where he missed from inside four feet. At the same time, playing in the final pair, DeChambeau sent his tee shot into the rough but held his nerve with a brilliant up and down to save par for a final round one-over 71.

That was good enough to earn the LIV Golf standard bearer a heart-stopping victory with a six-under 274 winning total. "Oh, man, I didn't want to finish second again," said DeChambeau, runner-up at last month's PGA Championship. "PGA really stung. As much as it is heartbreaking for some people, it was breakthrough for me at the PGA. I really wanted this one."

McIlroy had a final round 69 to finish alone in second one ahead of Americans Patrick Cantlay (70) and Tony Finau (67). It was the second career major win for DeChambeau,

his first coming at the 2020 US Open.

The 30-year-old American started the day at the top of the leaderboard three clear of the chasing pack that included McIlroy but trailed the world number three by two with five holes to play. "Ultimately on 13, I knew I had to make birdie there to give myself a chance because Rory was going on a heater," said DeChambeau, who collected his last birdie of the day at 13. "He (McIlroy) slipped up a couple on the way coming in, and I just kept staying the course."

DeChambeau had looked headed for another second place until McIlroy's sudden collapse. McIlroy had used a red hot putter to snatch the lead, but with the finish line in sight, suddenly went cold on the greens missing from 30 inches at the 16th and from inside four-feet at 18 leaving the Northern Irishman shellshocked as he walked off the course and quickly into his car putting the disaster in his rearview mirror.

The US Open thriller showcased golf's best providing fans something they have been regularly denied since the sport split into two camps with the PGA Tour on one side and Saudi-backed rebel circuit LIV Golf on the other. The



I really wanted this one. When I turned the corner and saw I was a couple back, I said, nope, I'm not going to let that happen. I was a little lucky. Rory didn't make a couple putts that he could have coming in. I had an amazing up-and-down on the last. I don't know what else to say. It's a dream come true."

—Bryson DeChambeau

final round on a tricky Pinehurst No. 2 layout featured two of the game's more intriguing personalities with McIlroy, long one of golf's most popular players and the big-hitting DeChambeau one of the most entertaining.

Along with the silver trophy, a record \$4.3 million winner's purse golf bragging rights were also on the line with a LIV golfer again claiming a major title.

Top scores (USA unless mentioned):
274 - Bryson DeChambeau 67-69-67-71; **275** - Rory McIlroy (Nir) 65-72-69-69; **276** - Tony Finau 68-69-72-67, Patrick Cantlay 65-71-70-70; **277** - Matthieu Pavon (Fra) 67-70-69-71; **278** - Hideki Matsuyama (Jpn) 72-66-70-70. AGENCIES



Bryson DeChambeau celebrates his win

BRYSON FACTFILE

Nationality: USA
Date of birth: Sept 16, 1993
Height: 6-feet-1
Weight: 98kg
Current world ranking: 38
Career Major Titles: 2
Career PGA Tour titles: 8
Career LIV Golf titles: 2

Nagpur man drove vehicle back & forth over family

► Continued from P 1

Bhushan Lanjewar allegedly drove the vehicle back and forth over the sleeping family while attempting to escape. Kavita Bagadiya, who lost her husband, recounted the horror: "The car drove over us and reversed, crushing us again, before speeding away."

The deceased were identified as Kantibai Bagadiya, 42, and Sitaram Bagadiya, 30. Seven of the injured are in critical condition in a hospital, while eight others were discharged after preliminary treatment. Among the injured are Sitaram's wife Kavita and their daughters — Haseena, 4, and Sakina, 2. Other injured family members include 10-year-old Bhushya, Kavita, 32, Parsanbai, 22, Parbai, 18, Balku, 8, Golu, 16, and Hanuman, 32.

Some of the 30 Bagadiya community members were fortunate to escape unhurt as they were sleeping a short distance away. Two police officers narrowly avoided being run over while trying to intercept the speeding car near the toll plaza.

Witnesses said the car first crashed into a parked Swift Dzire, causing the Hyundai Verana's front left tyre to burst. This led to Lanjewar losing control and driving onto the footpath where the family was sleeping.

Senior inspector Vijay Dighe of Wathoda police station said Lanjewar and his friends were intoxicated. Blood samples of all six have been sent to the regional forensic science laboratory. According to police, the youths were celebrating Zade's birthday, drinking at a dhaba in Hudkeshwar before embarking on a joyride on the outskirts of Nagpur.

Inspector Dighe said the driver was tracked down using CCTV footage and the vehicle's registration number. Police have impounded the car for inspection by RTO experts. However, car owner Saurabh Kadukar has not been charged. "We asked for five days' police remand (for the arrested six), but the court granted us two days," Dighe said.

With 2nd N-sub, India set to plug weakest leg of N-triad

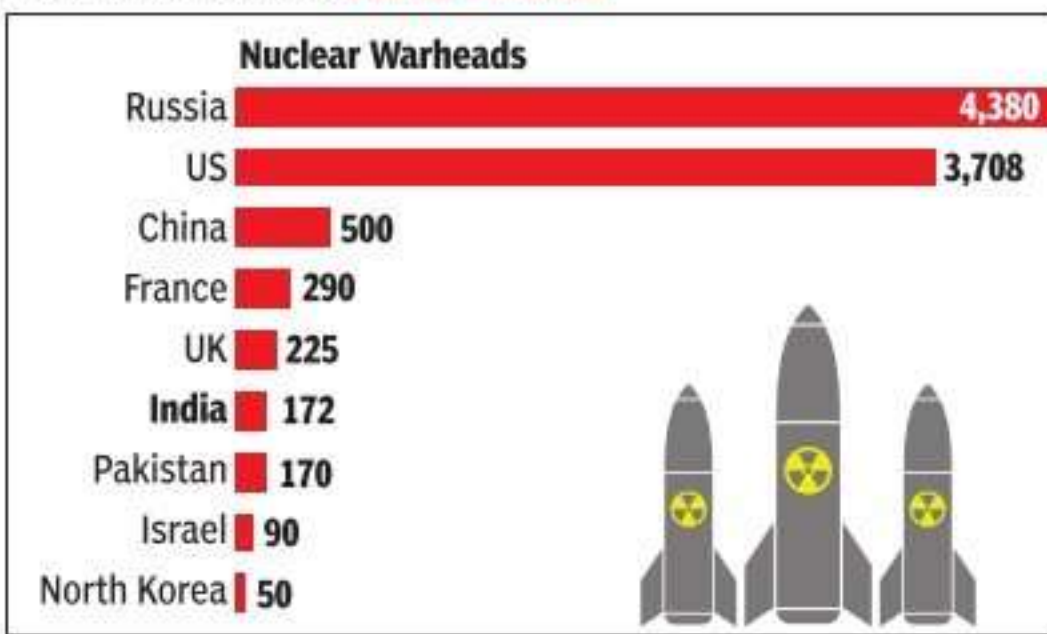
► Continued from P 1

Moreover, India is increasingly going in for more canister-launch missiles — with the warhead already mated with the missile — for the requisite operational readiness and flexibility to store it for long periods, swiftly transport it through rail or road, and fire it whenever required.

India is also set to strengthen its weakest leg of the nuclear triad by finally commissioning its second SSBN (naval par lance for nuclear-propelled submarines armed with nuclear-tipped ballistic missiles), INS Arighat, within the next few months. The first, INS Arihant, became operational in 2018.

SIPRI said the deterrence role of nuclear weapons has grown amid the ongoing geopolitical turmoil over conflicts like the Russia-Ukraine and Israel-Hamas

EXPANDING ARSENAL



ones. All the nine nuclear-armed states continue to modernise their nuclear arsenals, with several deploying new nuclear-armed or nuclear-capable weapon systems in 2023, it said.

The nuclear stockpiles stand at: Russia (4,380 warheads), US (3,708), France (290), UK (225), Israel (90) and North Korea (50). An estimated 3,904 of these war-

heads are deployed with missiles and aircraft, with the rest being kept in storage.

"Around 2,100 of the deployed warheads were kept in a state of high operational alert on ballistic missiles. Nearly all of these warheads belonged to Russia or the US, but for the first time China is believed to have some warheads on high operational alert," SIPRI said.

With Priyanka poll debut, 3 members of Gandhi family likely to be in Parliament

► Continued from P 1

To a query, Rahul accepted that Kharage has "warned" him of disciplinary action if he does not heed the apex body's resolution passed last week.

Rahul said while Kharage asked him to opt for Rae Bareilly, he too, felt that given the situation in the country, the main fight was in UP.

As Kharage said Rahul was vacating Wayanad with "great pain", the scion spoke about an "emotional bond" with Rae Bareilly and Wayanad, adding that he would stay in touch with the Kerala seat which, he expressed confidence, Priyanka would win — a sentiment that his sister reciprocated while underlining her long connection with Rae Bareilly-Amethi. "Both (Wayanad and Rae Bareilly)

will have two MPs," Rahul quipped. He said he will remember Wayanad's love for life, as "it gave me energy to fight in very difficult times".

Kharage thanked Priyanka for backing the party in difficult times with her campaigning, especially helping win back Amethi and managing Rahul's election in Rae Bareilly. Priyanka said, "I am very happy to be able to represent Wayanad. I won't let them feel Rahul's absence. I have an old relationship with Rae Bareilly... I will help Bhairavi in Rae Bareilly also. We will both be in Rae Bareilly and Wayanad." When asked if she was nervous, Priyanka said, "Not at all."

Priyanka's electoral debut implies that three members of the Gandhi family are now likely to be in Parliament, with Sonia Gandhi

having moved to the Rajya Sabha recently. It marks a show of confidence given that PM Modi and BJP have been trying to corner the Gandhis with the insinuation of "dynasty politics", a theme that was used widely in the recent polls.

The twin decisions from Congress, coming in the wake of an election performance that the party is celebrating as "credible in adverse circumstances", appear loaded with future calculations. With Congress and SP cementing a relationship in UP that recently delivered an embarrassment to the governing BJP, Rahul's staying on as representative in the state, coupled with the party's gains in Haryana, UP, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Jharkhand, Punjab in the 2024 contest, is designed to

create a buzz about its growing strength in north and west regions, from where it had practically vanished after the advent of PM Modi on the national scene. Kharage hinted as much, when he said, "We decided that Rahul will retain Rae Bareilly because it is very close to him and the family, which has been fighting the polls there for generations. Local workers also said it will be good for the party that Rahul retain Rae Bareilly."

At the same time, Congress hopes that Priyanka's presence in the south will bolster the party's position in turfs where her campaigning has been particularly effective, highlighted by the assembly wins in Karnataka followed by Telangana. Also, Kerala goes to the assembly polls in mid-2026.

After Class 7, Saudagar had to drop out of regular school

► Continued from P 1

Finally, it was Mukta Godbole of Deshmukh and Company who published 500 copies of the novel, Saudagar said. The 33-year-old grew up in poverty in Tuljapur of drought-prone Dharashiv (formerly Osmanabad) district of Maharashtra. With no land of their own, his grandfather and father were farm labourers and lived in a makeshift house.

"After Std VII, I had to drop out of regular school and went to a night school till Std X. By then, my father had started working in a tailoring shop and I helped out in the daytime," Saudagar said.

He studied motor mechanics in a nearby ITI (polytechnic) for two years in 2006 but the economic slowdown of 2008 meant he had no work. "That is when I took to tailoring. I had enrolled in junior college but had no money or time for studies since I was working full time," he said.

Undeterred, Saudagar enrolled in an open university and completed his MA (history) and picked up English-Marathi typing to improve his job prospects. Saudagar's love for writing started in Std VII. "We did not even have a radio in the house but the nearby village library had comics which I read. As I grew up, I started reading Annabhau Sathé's books," he added. By the age of 18, he had started scribbling poems and stories. Around 2014-15, one of his poems was published in a Marathi newspaper with his cellphone number.

Saudagar said: "They encouraged me to write more poetry and compile a collection. But I had no clue about publishing. So, I saved up Rs 8,000, went to Solapur and got the book self-published in 2018. There were 200 copies. I sent some to well-known Marathi writers. Only (Marathi litterateur) Bhalchandra Nemade replied with a two-page letter and a Rs 100 cheque, the price of the book. I have laminated the letter."

He is working on his next novel about joblessness among educated youngsters.

Centre to move on NTA reforms after court's NEET order

► Continued from P 1

The NEET-UG 2024 results, announced on June 4, faced widespread criticism from students and parents. Legal challenges were filed against the results, highlighting three main issues: the provision of grace marks to some students, claims of a leaked question paper, and suspected irregularities at specific exam centres. Many have called for an investigation and a retake of the exam.

Union education minister Dharmendra Pradhan emphasised on Sunday that the "harshest punishment" would be administered to those found guilty in the NEET UG 2024 "scam", while assuring students and parents that govt is taking the matter seriously.

A senior govt official said: "The matter is currently in the courts. The education ministry and NTA are also examining the details. However, once the issue is resolved based on the investigations and court orders, significant reforms will be initiated in all aspects of conducting these crucial examinations." The official added that the ministry of education is likely to form a committee to recommend the reforms.

As of Nov 2023, the NTA registered over 1.23 crore candidates, making it one of the largest exam-conducting bodies globally, second only to China's Gaokao, which registered 1.29 crore candidates in 2023.

For NEET-UG 2024, over 24 lakh candidates registered, while 14.7 lakh registered for the Joint Entrance Examination (Main), and more than 13.4 lakh for the CUET-UG 2024. Besides these major entrance exams for various undergraduate programmes, NTA also conducts other exams such as the National Council of Hotel Management Joint Entrance Exam (12,738 candi-

Nagal attains career-high ranking of 71

New Delhi: Sumit Nagal continued his ascent in the ATP singles chart, climbing to a career-high ranking of 71 on Monday. His previous best was 77 last week. The



Olympic-bound Nagal jumped six places following his runner-up finish at the Perugia ATP Challenger tournament on Sunday. The 26-year-old, who will be the sole Indian in the men's singles event at the Paris Olympics, has so far logged 777 ATP points.

A string of impressive results in recent times has not only helped Nagal improve his ranking but also make the cut for singles event at the Paris Games.

The year began with a historic second round outing at the Australian Open. While he bowed out of the French Open in the first round, Nagal is set to compete at in the main draw of Wimbledon followed by the Paris Olympics at Roland Garros. He had won the men's singles crown at the Heilbronn Neckarcup 2024 Challenger event in Germany earlier this month and the Chennai Open in February. **PTI**

Neeraj to resume Oly build-up at Paavo Nurmi Games in Finland

Turku (Finland): Forced into a short break to mend a niggle, Olympic and world champion javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra will return to competitive action at the Paavo Nurmi Games here on Tuesday against a stellar field, hoping to continue his build-up to Paris Games with renewed vigour.

The 26-year-old superstar, the lone Indian in the field here, will be up against German teenager sensation Max Dehning, who is the youngest member of the coveted 90m club, which Chopra is aspiring to enter.

The 19-year-old is seen as a major competition for Chopra when he defends his Tokyo Games gold medal in Paris. **PTI**